The Chat

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Cover: Kirtland's Warbler, 28 September 2018, Ridge Junction Overlook, NC
Photo by Alan Lenk

2017 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

Marilyn Westphal
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Twenty count areas completed surveys in 2017, one less than the previous year. Although Onslow County discontinued its count, Brunswick County picked up the slack to represent the coastal area. Also, the Grandfather Mountain count ran into some very inclement weather and could not complete the count this year, but intends to pick it up again next year.

Total species (239) was slightly lower than the past few years, but about average overall for the past dozen years. Total individual bird numbers (88,747) was also about average for that period. Although species and individual totals were average, participation (458 participants) bounced back to actually slightly above average in 2017 from a low 429 in 2016. The additional number of participants did not result in additional hours in the field, though. In fact, the field hours (1069.10) were well off the average of 1274.38 over the past dozen years.

A few of the rarities located included a Surf Scoter on the Kerr Lake count, a Common Merganser on the Pilot Mountain count, an Arctic Tern on the Falls Lake count, an Evening Grosbeak on the Rockingham County count, and a Wilson's Warbler and a Dickcissel on the Chapel Hill count. Many of the other species found on only one count were late departing winter residents. Some other unusual species located in two count areas included Mississippi Kite on the Rockingham and Brunswick counts, Warbling Vireo on the Pilot Mountain and Forsyth counts, Sedge Wren on the Mecklenburg and Chapel Hill counts, and Blue-winged Warbler on the Mecklenburg and Forsyth counts. Of course as the only coastal count, Brunswick County racked up a fantastic 34 species exclusive to that count. Perhaps it's time for another coastal area to give them some competition!

Most common (over 2000 individuals found) and widespread (reported on every count) species included Northern Cardinal (3852), American Crow (2928), Tufted Titmouse (2334), and Carolina Wren (2035). There were 22 species found on every count. The only warbler found on every count was Common Yellowthroat.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on that count follow.

Mountains

Transylvania County – Count date May 3rd, 124 species, 3695 individuals, 19 participants, 64.70 party-hours. Elevation ranges from 2100 to 5600 ft.

Weather: Clear, calm and warm. Temperature 45-75°F, cooler at higher elevations.

Compiler: Michael Plauché (captainbluegill@gmail.com)

Participants: Marvin Barg, Michele Barg, Susan Causey, Ray Dunkelberg, Jerry Griggs, Gary Harris, Kathy Harris, Claire Herzog, Elizabeth Galloway, Tim Lee, Joan McDonald, Malcolm McDonald, Michael Plauché, Marcus Simpson, Norma Siebenheller, Martine Stolk, Charlie Threatte, Linda Threatte, and Marilyn Westphal.

Exclusives: None

Notes: The 2017 Transylvania County Spring Bird Count was a great success thanks to the participants. One hundred and twenty-four species were logged, which matches the previous high count from 2013. It seems the great weather and eager volunteers united for this fantastic outcome. The day was calm and clear, starting off cool (in the forties), and warming to a perfectly pleasant afternoon with temperatures in the mid-seventies.

Nineteen volunteer observers logged 65 hours and nearly 160 miles. We turned up 25 species of warbler, four species of vireo, both Summer and Scarlet Tanager, Bald Eagle, Osprey, an American Woodcock, Swainson's, Hermit, and Wood Thrushes, Veery, Blue Grosbeak, Great Egret and many other great birds. The Ecusta Great Blue Heron colony continues to grow. Seventy-three individuals were recorded this year.

The spring bird count creates a valuable picture of bird populations and migratory trends from year to year. We all should be proud of our contribution in continuing this great tradition.

Michael Plauché

Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA – Count dates spanned from May 18-22 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 74 species, 3304 individuals, 24 participants in 11 parties, 71.20 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet.

Weather: Mostly cloudy to clear, temperatures from 45 to 65°F and winds from 5 to 15mph.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Seth Buddy, Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Savannah Clark, Robert Emmott, Tom Flagg, Kirk Gardner, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Andrew Laughlin, Nora Murdock, Michael Plauché, Catherine Reid, Barbara Reynolds, Russell Roe, Mark Simpson, Simon Thompson,Tom Tribble, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcowicz and Stan Wulcowicz

Exclusives: None

Notes: Although there were more individual birds found this year, the total species count was lower than average. No swallows, bluebirds, or Peregrine Falcons were seen, and for the first time since the count began

there were no Pine Siskins found. First time for the count was a Summer Tanager. It was a good year for Alder and Least Flycatcher with 36 each.

Chestnut-sided Warbler took back the top spot again as most common species (300) after playing second fiddle the previous couple of years. Dark-eyed Junco returned to second (290) followed by Eastern Towhee (229), Black-throated Green Warbler (202), Golden-crowned Kinglet (191), Blue-headed Vireo (136), Canada Warbler (166), Black-throated Blue Warbler (141), Veery (136), and American Robin (116). Good sized flocks of Red Crossbills were present in the area and Northern Saw-whet Owls were nesting at known locations once again making them an easy find.

As always the participants made this count a success. Many thanks for all they do.

Marilyn Westphal

Henderson County – Count date period from May 13th to May 16th (teams select which date to do their count), 104 species, 2291individuals, 22 participants in ten areas, 40.90 party-hours.

Weather: Variable

Compiler: Jim Neal (jlbjneal@gmail.com)

Participants: Phil Brown, Ruth Brown, Vickie Burke, Doug Carle, Muriel Carle, Barrie Cliff, Paulette Cliff, Liz Fitts, Cathy Ford, Joyce Gray, Liz Honnold, Michael McCurdy, Richard Meltzer, Barbara Neal, Jim Neal, Carol Palmer, Don Palmer, Nicole Salzman, Mark Simpson, Aaron Steed, Linda Wallace, and Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: None

Notes: The 2017 Spring Migration Count for Henderson County was conducted over a four-day period from May 13 through 16, 2017. Twenty-two (22) people counted 10 areas within the county and found 104 species and 2291 individual birds. The 104 species is near the midpoint of our low of 95 species set in 2015 and our high of 120 species found in 2006. The 2291 total birds are well below the midpoint between our low of 1612 in 2014 and the high of 3904 in 2012.

There were six species with more than 100 individuals including Cliff Swallow (150), followed by Song Sparrow (139), American Crow (132), Northern Cardinal (122) and Eastern Towhee and European Starling tied at 115.

Normally we get around 20 species of warblers and this year we found 21. The Black-throated Green (28) was most prevalent, followed closely by Ovenbird (25), Common Yellowthroat (20) and four with 17, including Northern Parula, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart and Hooded Warbler.

Other really good birds found included Black-bellied Plover, Semi-palmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Whip-poor-will, Acadian Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Grasshopper Sparrow and Bobolink. I want to thank all

those who helped with the count, particularly the several new people, for an excellent job.

Jim Neal

Buncombe County – Count dates ran from May 13-15 with each group selecting the date for their section, 113 species, 4024 individuals, 20 participants in nine parties, 60.90 party-hours.

Weather: Cool and fair, partly sunny over the period.

Compiler: Tom Tribble (tntribble@gmail.com)

Participants: Tom Bush, Nancy Casey, K. Hillegas, Doug Johnston, K Kelly, Herman Lankford, D. Liberatori, R. Liberatori, D. McFatter, Janie Owens, Liz Payne, Kitti Reynolds, J Rittenburg, Russell Roe, Mark Simpson, Vin Stanton, Tom Tribble, Marilyn Westphal, Jay Wherley, and Steve Yurkovich

Exclusives: Cerulean Warbler

Notes: Some comparisons from the last few years include:

2014 – 120 species, 5421 individuals
2015 – 112 species, 4902 individuals
2016 – 109 species, 4913 individuals
2017 – 113 species, 4024 individuals

Birds reported this year, but not reported the last few years include Gray-cheeked Thrush, Black-billed Cuckoo (two in different sections, but interestingly not at Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary), and Common Nighthawk.

Most common birds included American Robin (220), European Starling and Cedar Waxwing (179), and American Crow (176).

There were 22 species of warbler, the same total as the last two years. No Pine Warbler found last year, and no Kentucky Warbler this year.

Tom Tribble

Black Mountains IBA – Count period ran from May 25th-30th with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 61 species, 2168 individuals, 14 participants in 14 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 41.85 party-hours.

Weather: Enough pleasant weather during the count period that everyone could find a decent day to do their section. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 ft. with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.

Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)

Participants: Seth Buddy, Miles Buddy, Bob Knight, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Andrew Laughlin, Nora Murdock, Michael Plauché, Barbara Reynolds, Debbie Segal, Aaron Steed, Mark Simpson, Simon Thompson, and Marilyn Westphal

Exclusives: None

Notes: It was a fairly typical spring count with average numbers of species and individuals and no unexpected species found with most species exhibiting typical numbers. Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, Hooded Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler numbers were higher than usual, but this probably was largely the result of better coverage at some of the middle elevations where these species are more common. It will take more years of counts to determine if any middle elevation species might be moving a little higher to breed. Higher elevation species showed no particular differences with previous years. However, Red Crossbill numbers were very good this year with some good sized flocks seen.

Much of the area covered in this count is high elevation spruce/fir habitat, and the most frequently found species are those common to that habitat. This year, as usual, the top ten species were largely dominated by spruce/fir specialists and included Dark-eyed Junco (256), Black-throated Green Warbler (189), Golden-crowned Kinglet (155), Blue-headed Vireo (135), Black-throated Blue Warbler (127), Canada Warbler (112), Red-breasted Nuthatch (87), Blackburnian Warbler (82), Ovenbird (75), and Eastern Towhee (73).

No Swainson's Thrushes were found this year and numbers have been declining for the past few years over the spring/summer season, so perhaps the small population that has been present over the past several years was not large enough to sustain itself over the long term. Also, since no nocturnal birding was carried out and no Northern Saw-whet Owls were found nesting in the area this year, the only owl species found was a Barred Owl.

Many thanks once again to all the participants. This count requires some significant hiking over sometimes steep and/or rocky trails, so their efforts are always greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Westphal

Hanging Rock State Park IBA – Count date May 3rd, 92 species, 1258 individuals, 14 participants in six parties, 20.00 party-hours. Elevation range 1200-2400 feet.

Weather: No report.

Compiler: Jean Chamberlain (jchamberlain1@windstream.net)

Participants: Farida Abbas, Gayathri Baliga, Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Nita Colvin, Allison Gagnon, John Harris, Derek Hudgins, Don Kautz, Kyle Kittelberger, Ron Morris, Laura Phail, Cara Woods and Tony Woods.

Exclusives: None

Notes: None

Piedmont

Iredell County – Count date April 23rd, 79 species, 1118 individuals, seven participants, 10.00 party-hours.

Weather: Rain, temperature ranged from 44-46°F; totally miserable weather.

Count area: Circle centered on South Yadkin River Bridge - Chipley Ford Road in Northern Iredell County.

Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)

Participants: Debbie Birnley, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Larry Marlin, Jason Thiele, Garnet Underwood and Ron Underwood

Exclusives: Purple Finch, Vesper Sparrow

Notes: Totally dismal conditions prevailed on count day. Thanks to those who were able to come out or who were able to send in feeder reports. In spite of the conditions we had 79 species and 1118 individuals.

Ron Underwood

Mecklenberg County – count date April 23rd, 135 species, 6982 individuals, 35 participants, 86.15 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Jeff Lemons (birdsalot@gmail.com)

Participants: Leigh Ann Carter, Bill Duston, Shep Foley, Jan Fowler, Noreen George, Robert Gilson, Jennifer Guyton, Jill Guyton, Jim Guyton, Chris Hanna, John Hanna, Greg Hays, Matt Janson, Dennis Kent, Malia Kline, Alan Kneidel, Ken Kneidel, Lenny Lampel, Dennis Lankford, Jeff Lemons, Joclyn MacLaughlin, Pat MacLaughlin, Kevin Metcalf, Roger Moyer, Jill Palmer,Taylor Piephoff, Lucy Quintilliano, Barry Rowan, Tammy Sanders, Tom Sanders, John Scavetto, Don Seriff, Will Stuart, Rob VanEpps, Judy Walker

Exclusives: Pectoral Sandpiper, Lincoln's Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird

Notes: None

Pilot Mountain State Park – Count date May 4th, 111 species, 1936 individuals, nine participants, five teams, 30.75 party-hours. Surry County - Pilot Mountain is the count center.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Jesse Anderson (jesse.anderson@ncparks.gov)

Participants: Jean Aldrich, Jesse Anderson, Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Don Kautz, Kyle Kittelberger, Ron Morris, Cara Woods, Tony Woods

Exclusives: Common Merganser

Notes: A small, but mighty crew counted 111 species, covering mostly park land, but unable to cover the entire count circle. The total was up from

109 last year, which was the first year of the count. Birding records in Surry County still have some potential, so quite a few county records were added.

Interesting contributions included county records of four Common Mergansers, likely the same two adult male/female pair seen by two parties at different locations on the Yadkin River, new to both Yadkin and Surry Counties according to NC Bird Records on the CBC website, a high count of 15 Broad-winged Hawks in Yadkin County, a Northern Harrier, a small group of Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows (also Surry County records), and 21 species of warbler.

Jesse Anderson

Forsyth County – Count date May 6th, 124 species, 5660 individuals, 52 participants in 12 teams, 82.00 party-hours.

Weather: cloudy, temperature 55-65°F, wind 10 mph and gusty
Compiler: Ron Morris (ronmorris@triad.rr.com)

Participants: Mary Franklin Blackburn, Kim Brand, Malcolm Brown, Jean Chamberlain, David Collins, Nita Colvin, Donovan Conway, Mike Conway, Phil Crisp, Carol Cunningham, Doug Demerest, David Disher, Susan Disher, Cynthia Donaldson, Kerry Eckhardt, Karyl Gabriel, Allison Gagnon, Nathan Gatto, Carol Gearhart, Bill Gifford, Elnora Gore, John Haire, Roper Halverson, Hop Hopkins, Royce Hough, Derek Hudgins, Bill Jackson, Don Kautz, Don Lendle, Jim Martin, Craig McCleary, Jane McClearly, Heather Moir, Ron Morris, Ann Newsome, Laura Phail, Jeremy Reiskind, Nancy Russo, Lee Salisbury, Gene Schepker, Lois Schneider, David Shuford, Philip Stewart, Ron Story, Bill Sugg, Chuck Thompson, Cindy Thompson , Katherine Thorington, Andrew Thornton, Gray Tuttle, Jay Wilhelmi, and Lucia Zinzow.

Exclusives: None

Notes: It turned out to be a pretty average year despite the unpleasant weather. The average over 26 years is 126.2 species and 5658.2 individuals. This year 52 stalwart birders identified 124 species and counted 5660 individuals. We missed Louisiana Waterthrush, but we average only one or two each year and miss them altogether not infrequently. This is the second year in a row that we found no Prairie Warblers. The most disappointing was the absence of Yellow-crowned Night Heron. This is the second year in a row that we found none, but they have been in steady decline since the high count of 13 in 2003. Last year we had none, in 2015 we had two, and in 2014 we had one.

Good finds this year included a Great Egret near Tanglewood, the first in seven years and only the sixth in 26 years. Another excellent find was a Caspian Tern at Salem Lake, the first in four years and only the sixth in 26 years including three in 2013. Finally, a Blue-winged Warbler was found at Washington Park, the third in four years and just the fourth in 18 years.

Many thanks to all participants, especially the team leaders who organized coverage of their areas and got their teams' data to me promptly.

Ron Morris

Rockingham County – Count date May 2nd, 106 species, 1144 individuals, five participants in three parties, 15.75 party-hours.

Weather: Mostly clear skies and moderate winds, temperature 57-76°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Kyle Kittelberger, Cara Woods and Tony Woods.

Exclusives: American Bittern, Evening Grosbeak

Notes: The Fifth Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was held on Tuesday, May 2nd, under mostly clear skies and moderate winds and temperature. The five observers tallied 106 species (average 108) and 1144 individuals (average 1632).

First count records include a surprise dawn flyover American Bittern over Mayo River Road, two Cliff Swallows seen over Groagan Lake, and a singing and seen Ruby-crowned Kinglet on Mayo River Road. But the female Evening Grosbeak continuing at a feeder in Mayodan was incredible!

Other goodies for the count records included our third Green Heron at May Park Ponds, a second Peregrine Falcon over Cedar Mountain, a pair of third record flyover American Woodcocks over Mayo River Road, a second Blackburnian Warbler, and a third record Cape May Warbler.

Misses included all three owl species normally found because of pre-dawn winds, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Kingbird, Swainson's Thrush, Black-and-white Prothonotary, and Worm-eating Warblers, and, possibly another that may be blamed on wind, a Grasshopper Sparrow.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Greensboro – Count date April 29th, 121 species, 9038 individuals, 34 participants, 98.35 party-hours.

Weather: The weather was warm for the time of year, with a low of 72 and a high of 86. Skies were partly to mostly cloudy and winds were light, averaging 10 mph with an occasional gust to 20 mph. There was no precipitation.

Compiler: Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

Participants: Nancy Adamson, Carolyn Allen, Bruce Billings, Jim Buchanan, Dennis Burnette, Lynn Burnette, Sue Cole, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Craig Lawrence, Jane Lawrence, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Lyn McCoy, Lynn Moseley, Jean Murdick, Lauren Murdick, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Ann Presnell, Danny Royster, Tripti Sawal, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Ann Steighner, Jim Strickland, Emily Tyler, Ann VanSant, Ann Walter-Fromson, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, and Melissa Whitmire

Exclusives: None

Notes: The Spring Count in Greensboro was held on April 29. Thirty-four counters took part in the count, a few more than our average of 30 over the last 20 years. Those counters put in 98.25 party hours, slightly lower than our average of 103.

For this year's count, we had a total of 121 species, which is slightly lower than our average of 125, plus six count week birds. For the last 20 years, our highest species count was 136 in 2005, and lowest was 110 in 2010.

The number of individual birds counted was 9038. This was well above our 20-year average of 7221. I went back to 1995 for a year in which a larger number of birds (9625) were counted.

Notables included a Greater Scaup, found on an office park retention pond, the first occurrence of a Greater Scaup in the 50 years of our available records; and a Black-billed Cuckoo, which has turned up on our count only five times in the last 50 years.

Elizabeth Link

Southern Pines – Count date May 7th, 127 species, 5288 individuals, 28 participants in 11 teams, 69.95 party-hours.

Weather: Quite good for a change! Dry with light winds, temperature 43-71°, altogether a very pleasant day!

Compiler: Susan Campbell (susan@ncaves.com)

Participants: Jennifer Archambault, Rex Badgett, Doreen Blanchette, Carol Bowman, Susan Campbell, Jay Carter, Bob Ganis, Tina Ganis, Gabriella Garrison, Ryan Garrison, Scott Hartley, Yvette Haughney, Tom Howard, Charlie Jones, Linda Jones, Sheila Klein, Marjorie Ludwig, Jeff Marcus, Bill Mullin, Jon Rouse, Bruce Sorrie, Mike Stewart, Rick Studenmund, Michelle Wilcox, Dave Williams, Nancy Williams, Darryl Young and Shelly Young

Exclusives: Lark Sparrow

Notes: Count day was, again, later in the spring due to the conflict with the Carolina Bird Club Spring Meeting. A number of regular participants had conflicts, and so we had minimal to no coverage in some areas of the circle. Furthermore, Lake Surf was still mostly drained as a result of issues with safety of the dam and spillway. Loss of the largest body of water in the area affected our count, as it did during the Christmas Bird Count in December. Although we had a few species of shorebird there, it did not make up for the loss of diversity that has been typical of the lake area in the past.

We did have several species new to the count that were not unanticipated for our region, but were nice to see and helped bolster numbers given our deficits in certain areas. Little Blue Heron, Anhinga, and Mississippi Kites were all very nice surprises.

Some surprising misses included Eastern Screech-Owl and Field Sparrow. Sadly, we had no interesting warblers or thrushes. Bobolink and

Baltimore Oriole are fairly unusual finds, but they also never turned up during the day.

Regardless of what were lackluster results for the most part, participants all seemed to have had an enjoyable day. In spite of what seemed to be more challenges for our seasonal count, folks are enthusiastic about continuing the tradition into the future.

Susan Campbell

Chapel Hill – Count date May 13th, 130 species, 8381 individuals, 48 field observers and three feeder watchers, 127.7 party hours.

Weather: Low 53°F, high 65°F; wind variable 0-5mph, mostly cloudy, no rain.

Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Participants: Julie Angerman, Todd Bishop, Brian Bockhahn, Richard Brown, Narm Budnitz, Jim Capel, Tait Chandler, Bob Chase, Laura Clifford, Will Cook, Deb Copeland, Maria deBruyn, Tom Driscoll, Cynthia Fox, Jill Froning, Tim Gerla, Vicki Glower, Mark Goodwin, Steve Graves, Beth Gregory, Lynda Haake, Bobbie Hahn, Jan Hansen, Karyn Hede, Gene Kingsley, Geraldine Kingsley, Mark Kosiewski, Ken Lundstrom, Mary McLelland, Adair McNear, David Murdock, Jane Oliver, Jeff Pippen, Jelma Poelski, Margaret Scott, Julia Shields, David Smith, Judy Smith, Paule Taille, Edith Tatum, Ginger Travis, Margaret Wainwright, Bill Ward and Zoe

Exclusives: Wilson's Warbler, Dickcissel

Notes: We had an excellent Chapel Hill spring count on Saturday, May 13, 2017 with the second highest species count in the last 30 years, though for numbers of individual birds it was quite average. The calm, cool overcast conditions made for very pleasant counting and no doubt helped the count by keeping the birds active throughout the day. The species total of 130 is nine above the ten-year average of 121, though the total number of birds, 8381, is close to the average of 8433. Effort on the count was average with 127.7 party-hours (average 128.2) as was the number of birds per party hour (63.6, average 65.9).

We had an absolutely incredible three species new to the count this year. Short-billed Dowitcher, Willow Flycatcher, and Dickcissel. I'm not sure when that last occurred, but it was probably decades ago. The Chapel Hill count has been going on continuously since 1957, so it isn't easy to add new species! The Short-billed Dowitcher was spotted by Jan Hansen on the rocky bank near the dam at University Lake. Jan also scored a Dickcissel at Maple View Farm and got a nice photograph. Mark Kosiewski found the Willow Flycatcher on the Briar Chapel trail. It cooperated nicely for photos, but couldn't be identified for sure without hearing its call. Fortunately, it responded to a tape of Willow by sounding off the fitz-bew call. Other goodies included Common Gallinule (Jill Froning, 4th count record), Semi-palmated Plover (Hansen), Black-billed Cuckoo (Mark Goodwin, first since

1975), Hermit Thrush (Karyn Hede), Blackburnian Warbler (Brian Bockhahn), Palm Warbler (Kosiewski), both Canada and Wilson's Warblers at Mason Farm (Will Cook), and a count week King Rail (Ginger Travis, who couldn't get to Cub Creek on count day).

We set a good number of record highs this year: Spotted Sandpiper (97, average 16), N. Rough-winged Swallow (254, average 68), Cliff Swallow (62, average seven), Magnolia Warbler (14, average two). This is the second record-setting year in a row for Rough-winged Swallow and Magnolia Warbler. Also with unusually high numbers: Solitary Sandpiper (20, average 10), Eastern Wood Pewee (67, average 32), Acadian Flycatcher (81, average 59), Barn Swallow (179, average 74), Veery (11 is highest since 1978, average three), Louisiana Waterthrush (31 is highest since 1976, average 14), Yellow Warbler (15, average eight), Chestnut-sided Warbler (six, average one), and Black-throated Green Warbler (three, average one).

The one big miss was Blue-headed Vireo, the first miss of this local breeding bird since 1985. Remarkably scarce this year: Eastern Kingbird (15 is lowest since 1974, average 26), Purple Martin (19, average 53), Wood Thrush (38, average 60), White-throated Sparrow (one ties record low, average 17), and House Sparrow (13 ties record low set last year, average 47).

Team honors: Jan Hansen, covering both the University Lake and Dairyland Road areas, recorded an outstanding 97 species and 819 individual birds, the highest for both. Tom Driscoll got the highest individual count with 910.

Thanks to the 48-field counters and 2 feeder watchers for your help.

Charles W. "Will" Cook

Jordan Lake – Count date May 7th, 112 species, 7,532 individuals, 47 participants in 23 parties, 136.12 party-hours.

Weather: The temperature ranged from 43°F in the morning to 65°F in the afternoon. Winds were variable to about 10 mph and the sky was clear to partly cloudy.

Compiler: Norm Budnitz (nbudnitz@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsy Bailey, Barbara Beaman, Eliabeth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Brian Bockhahn, Vern Bothwell, Richard Brown, Norm Budnitz, Chris Canfield, Carol Chelette, Barbara Coffman, Patrick Coin,Will Cook, Joe Donahue, Tom Driscoll, Perry Haaland, Russell Herman, Loren Hintz, Bo Howes, Gene Kingsley, Terry Korab, Tom Krakauer, Susan Lyons, Kerry MacPherson, Trish MacPherson, Jennifer Maher, Beth Mancuso, Marty McClelland, Kyle Mills, Frank McKeever,Eddie Owens, Mark Owens, Rick Payne, Doug Pratt, Tommy Richey, Michael Ryan, Beverly Scalise, Roger Shaw, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Pam Timmons, Chris Tomazic, Ginger Travis, Andy Upshaw, Margaret Vimmerstedt, Rouse Wilson, and Joe Zellers

Exclusives: None

Notes: May 7, 2017, was a beautiful day for birding. The temperature ranged from 43°F in the morning to 65°F in the afternoon. Winds were variable to about 10 mph and the sky was clear to partly cloudy.

Forty-seven observers in 23 parties participated (our ten-year averages are 45 and 21, respectively). We tallied 7532 individual birds (avg. 8099) and 112 species (avg. 121) in 136 party hours (avg. 127). With more observers in more parties counting for more hours, we counted fewer species and fewer individual birds. Hmmm!

For the first year since I can remember, we did not report any record high numbers for any particular species for the count. Hmmm!

We also had some notable 'misses,' birds we usually see at least one or two of each spring: Solitary Sandpiper, Belted Kingfisher, Veery, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush. Hmmm!

There was plenty of competition in the area with a bicycle race, a swimming race, and a motorcycle rally. One party counted an astounding 349 motorcycles thundering past. Hmmm!

Okay everyone, hmmm along with me. Is any of this meaningful in the grander scheme of things? Probably not, but maybe so. Let's see how things develop over the next few years. Organizations such as the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology report seeing overall decreases in Neotropical migrants during the past several decades. We need to keep a watchful eye. Will Cook, working the Shearon Harris area, and Jennifer Maher and Roger Shaw, covering Big Woods Road, both reported 76 species. Brian Bockhahn reported five species of nocturnal birds: Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Chuck-will's-widow, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. It pays to get up early! Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, and Doug Pratt found two juvenile Great Horned Owls in an old Bald eagle nest. Roger Shaw turned up a Blue-winged Teal first thing in the morning and heard two Northern Bobwhites during the count period, though not on count day.

Norm Budnitz

Durham – Count date April 30th, 107 species, 3360 individuals, 13 participants in 7 parties, 41.60 party-hours.

Weather: Cloudy, light winds, temperature 71°-87°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsy Bailey, Brian Bockhahn, Norm Budnitz, Will Cook, Ruben Dario, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Mark Kosiewski, Tom Krakauer, Eddie Owen, Isabel Reddy, Lynn Richardson, and Jenny Stanley

Exclusives: None

Notes: The Durham Spring Bird Count was held on Sunday, April 30, 2017. Total species tallied was 107 (average 112), and total individuals was 3360 (average 4717).

Unlisted species included a pair of Mute Swans that were seen at Quail Roost. Tom Krakauer said it may be the last time he is able to count in this

area. We will miss his years of dedicated service and nice to see one more rare bird contribution! A total of nine Bonaparte's Gulls were seen from Hickory Hill, probably should be more regular, but they are lingering this spring in good numbers.

Other goodies include a flyover Common Loon over Knapp of Reeds Creek, two parties reporting Bobolink at Brickhouse Road and Lake Michie, and a male Baltimore Oriole in alternate plumage at Brickhouse Road.

Misses include Sharp-shinned Hawk, Solitary Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, and Northern Waterthrush.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered.

Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake – Count date April 25th, 108 species, 2648 individuals, 15 participants in eight parties, 50.30 party-hours.

Weather: Heavy rains with clearing skies later in the day, temperature 61-73°F.

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Sebastian Bloc, Lucas Bobay, Brian Bockhahn, Todd Bishop, Norm Budnitz, Lena Gallitano, Kyle Kittelberger, Deborah Robertson, Mike Schultz, Deck Stapleton, Patty Tice, Pat Tyndall, and Russ Tyndall

Exclusives: Arctic Tern

Notes: The 14th Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 25th under heavy rains and increasing lake levels.

Most numerous birds were 397 Cliff Swallows followed distantly by 135 Double-crested Cormorants and 129 Northern Cardinals.

First records included an absolutely mind-blowing Artic Tern at Sandling Beach seen and photographed and even chased by a few local birders. Not only a new to the spring count species, but new to the Falls Lake checklist, which now stands at a whopping 319 species! Another first count record was a Semipalmated Plover at Rollingview.

Other goodies included our fourth Least Sandpiper and our fifth Laughing Gull at Rollingview, our fifth Common Tern at Sandling Beach, our second Forster's Tern at lake's center, and our fifth Bank Swallow at lake's center.

With the rain and floods misses were many and included Sharp-shinned Hawk for the third time, Solitary Sandpiper for the fourth time, Eastern Screech-Owl for the fifth time as well as Whip-poor-will (first miss), Chuck-wills-widow (second miss), Eastern Wood Pewee (fourth miss), Acadian Flycatcher (second miss), Yellow Warbler (first miss), Northern Waterthrush (fifth miss), and Rose-breasted Grosbeak (fourth miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered for the count!

Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake – Count date April 27th, 117 species, 4307 individuals, 14 participants in seven parties, 45.90 party-hours.

Weather: Clear skies, moderate winds, mild temperatures (63°-77°F).

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Carol Mauzey, Grace McCrowell, David Spears, Evan Spears, Deck Stapleton and Clyde Wilson.

Exclusives: Surf Scoter

Notes: The 14th Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 27th under clear skies, moderate winds, mild temperatures, and increasing lake level. Most common species found were Double-crested Cormorant (406), Black Vulture (259), American Crow (178), and Turkey Vulture (172).

New to the spring check list were Least Bittern heard calling for 15 minutes at Dick Cross! Also, a wayward female Surf Scoter was seen above the dam with a flock of mergansers before taking flight.

Other goodies included a second record Dunlin, seen and photographed above the dam in the rising waters, a third record Horned Lark for the second year at the same site near Bullocksville, a fourth record American Kestrel at Dick Cross, a fourth record Red-breasted Nuthatch at Henderson Point, and fifth record Herring Gull above the dam and Broad-winged Hawk around Bullocksville.

Nothing was missed off the A-list, but misses include Acadian Flycatcher for the second time, Ruby-crowned Kinglet for the fourth time, Black-throated Green Warbler for the third time, Savannah Sparrow for the second time, and Baltimore Oriole for the fourth time.

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count.

Brian Bockhahn

Raven Rock State Park – Count date April 29th, 111 species, 4078 individuals, 17 participants in 11 teams, 73.15 party-hours.

Weather: Temperature - 72-92° F; wind SSW at 0-20 mph; water open. AM sunny, PM sunny. Count circle center at junction of NC210 and SR 1434.

Compiler: Erik R. Thomas (erthomas@ncsu.edu)

Participants: John Bartlett, Steve Buscynski, Charles Byrd, David DuMond, Martha Fisk, Michael Fisk, Molly Fullwood, Paul Hart, Tom Howard, Prudence Mainor, Tim McGreal, Jeff Mielke, Kevin Rease, Mitch Reese, Mary Stevens, Erik Thomas and Amber Williams

Exclusives: None

Notes: Our total of 111 species was the lowest in several years. In general, we found the species that occur regularly in the circle at this time of year, but came up short on irregularly occurring species such as Worm-eating and Yellow Warblers. We also missed certain lingering winter species such as Savannah Sparrow. Among the highlights, Bobolinks

seemed to be at the height of their migration, with five different parties finding them. Two parties (Michael and Martha Fisk; Kevin and Mitch Reese) reported Swainson's Warblers. Other good finds were two Northern Bobwhites by Tim McGreal, two American Woodcocks by Tom Howard and Chuck Byrd, and a Wilson's Snipe by David DuMond.

Erik R. Thomas

Coast

Brunswick County – Count date April 23rd, 158 species, 10,535 individuals, 21 participants, 63.00 party-hours.

Weather: Overcast skies, scattered light to heavy showers, wind NE from 5-15mph, temperature 59-71°F.

Compiler: Dave Weesner (david.weesner@yahoo.com) and Sam Cooper (dmcooper2@juno.net)

Participants: Jamie Adams, Ann Bobeck, Kathleen Bowman, Sam Cooper, Ed Corey, Shun Endo, Dalton Jackson, Mark Jones, Amanda Kiel, Sherry Lane, Pat PcPherson, Mary Lynn Meister, Ann Orsillo, Joanne Parker, Harry Sell, Hugh and Deborah Shaw, Bruce Smithson, Jerzy Smykla, Dave Weesner, Carson Wood

Exclusives: Lesser Scaup, Black Scoter, Horned Grebe, Clapper Rail, American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover, Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Willet, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Least Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black Skimmer, Common Loon, Northern Gannet, Brown Pelican, Snowy Egret, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, White Ibis, Swallow-tailed Kite, Merlin, Seaside Sparrow, Boat-tailed Grackle, Painted Bunting

Notes: Spring counts were conducted years ago in the Wilmington Christmas Bird Count circle, which contains portions of Brunswick and New Hanover Counties, and a Spring North American Migration Count (NAMC) was conducted in Brunswick County in 1996, 1997, and 1998. The NAMC counts conducted in Brunswick County during the 1990s yielded 138 to 146 species during the dates of 9 and 11 May and participants ranged from 13 to 22. The count in 2017 was conducted on 23 April and yielded 158 species from the effort of 21 participants.

Brunswick County is the fourth-largest county in North Carolina and occupies over 1050 square miles, including over 40 miles of ocean-beach shoreline, portions of the Cape Fear, Brunswick, Waccamaw, and Lockwood Folly Rivers, and the southern half of the Green Swamp. Twenty-one observers in eight groups concentrated on some of the birding hotspots, including the beaches of Sunset, Ocean Isle, Oak Island, Bald Head, the southern portion of Ft. Fisher, the Green Swamp, Southport area, Orton Pond, Brunswick Nature Park, EV Henwood, and Indian Creek by boat (the only area covered by boat). Eagle Island and areas associated with the old Orton Plantation property were not surveyed due to access restrictions.

The count was hampered by some inclement weather, including scattered heavy downpours and cool, breezy NE winds. A small-craft advisory prevented boat coverage in areas that will hopefully be covered in future counts, including Battery Island, where over 10,000 White Ibis nests were surveyed this spring (including a few Glossy Ibis, which were missed). The count date was conducted a little early for some summer residents and some common birds were missed (i.e., Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Eastern Wood Pewee). Despite any setbacks, the count was a success and produced a respectable list including some lingering winter species and a good representation of water and shore birds. No crazy off-course birds and best sightings included three Swallow-tailed Kites just south of Leland, a good number of lingering Black Scoters, a horned grebe, and a variety of species that are present but not always easy to find like Black-throated Green Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Least Bittern, Wood Stork, Sedge Wren, and Whip-poor-will. One of the resident Monk Parakeets was found in the town of Northwest where a pair has been present for the past several years. Although they have built nests, no young have been reported, and the current status for species on the North Carolina list is "not established."

A count date in late April with more coverage (people and boats) and better weather could certainly yield even higher counts in the future.

Dave Weesner and Sam Cooper

Appendix

To view the Appendix detailing species identified on each count, click in the box below:

2018 Annual Report of the North Carolina Bird Records Committee

Nathan A. Swick [1], Chair, Keith E. Camburn, Samuel Cooper, Jan J. Hansen, W. Jefferson Lemons, Jeffrey S. Pippen, Joshua L. Southern, Andrew K. Thornton, Robert W. Van Epps
[1] *4904 Jessup Grove Rd, Greensboro, NC 27410 nswick@aba.org*

The make-up of the 2018 North Carolina Bird Records Committee included additions of Nathan A. Swick, Andrew K. Thornton, and Jan J. Hansen as voting members; and the retention of Richard J. Davis and Harry E. LeGrand Jr. in advisory capacities. Susan Campbell, Steven P. Shultz, and Z. Taylor Piephoff rotated off the Committee for at least a one-year hiatus.

Accepted as Valid. The following reports were judged to be valid.

Common Swift (*Apus apus*) (18-01). A written description with photos of an *Apus* swift near Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) on 7 October 2017 by Carol Hare was reviewed by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee (NCBRC) in 2018. The committee initially voted 6-3(ID) to accept, with those voting "No" citing the difficulty of identifying *Apus* swifts to species given the quality of the photographic evidence. Such a vote requires a second evaluation with outside review to place the species on the NC list. That review was invited and the report was resubmitted as a Class C report with comments from a number of Old World authorities, all of whom stated that the available evidence strongly suggested Common Swift. The NCBRC unanimously agreed, accepting the record 9-0 on the second ballot. This remarkable record represents the first for North Carolina and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) (18-03). The NCBRC reviewed a written description by Dwayne Martin and photos by Lori Owenby of a subadult individual of this species at Lake Hickory (*Catawba/Alexander*) on 17 November 2017. The report was unanimously accepted and represents the second record for the Piedmont region of North Carolina.

Broad-billed Hummingbird (*Cynanthus latirostris*) (18-04). A report with photographs submitted by Susan Campbell of an adult female Broad-billed Hummingbird banded by the observer at a private home in Southern Shores (*Dare*) on 19 November 2017 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This individual was first reported on 1 November 2017 and found dead by natural causes on 1 January 2018. This represents the state's fourth record of this species.

Broad-billed Hummingbird, 19 Nov 2017, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Steve Shultz

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) (18-05). The NCBRC reviewed a written description of at least 11 individuals, with photos of 1, submitted by Ed Corey from a Seabirding pelagic trip southeast of Oregon Inlet (*Dare*) on 10 February 2018. The report was accepted unanimously. This represents a high count of this species in North Carolina and the seventh time it has been observed in the state.

Kirtland's Warbler *(Setophaga kirtlandii)* (18-06). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a record of a subadult Kirtland's Warbler captured at a banding station near the Appalachian Trail in Pisgah National Forest (*Yancey*) on 3 October 2017, with written description and in-hand photographs by Mark Hopey. This record represents the seventh record of this endangered warbler in North Carolina, all but one of which have been in the fall.

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) (18-07). An exciting record of a Red-billed Tropicbird on 9 February 2018 at Nags Head (*Dare*), with written description and photographs from David Disher, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the first winter record for this species in North Carolina, and one of very few winter records of this species in the United States.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*) (18-08). A stunning adult male Chestnut-collared Longspur seen at the Cape Point Campground, Cape Hatteras National Seashore (*Dare*) on 17 May 2018 was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. With written description and photographs by Michael Gosselin, this represents the fourth North Carolina record of this Great Plains songbird.

Roseate Spoonbill (*Platalea ajaja*) The summer of 2018 saw an unprecedented incursion of Roseate Spoonbills into the Piedmont and

Mountains of North Carolina. The following reports were accepted by the NCBRC.

(18-09) Written description and photos by Biz Allen of a bird on the French Broad River in *Henderson* 3 June 2018. Accepted 8-1, with one member finding the report to be inadequately documented. This represents the first record for the mountains.

(18-12) Written description and photos by David Schroder of a bird near Davidson in *Mecklenberg* 27 May-27 June 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the eighth Piedmont record.

(18-10) Written description and photos by Jacob Farmer of a bird at Crabtree Creek wetlands in *Wake* 16 June 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the ninth Piedmont record.

(18-11) Written description and photos by Louis Skrabec of a bird at Plainfield Rd Marsh in *Guilford* 24 July 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the tenth Piedmont record.

(18-13) Written description and photos by Shelley Rutkin of three birds at North Rugby Road in *Henderson* 21 July 2018. Accepted unanimously and representing the second record for the mountains.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) (18-14). The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written description and photos of a Curlew Sandpiper at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*), 24-26 July 2018, submitted by Karen Lebing. Formerly a rare but regular vagrant in North Carolina, this is the first record of this species in the state since 2008.

Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata*) (18-15). Easily one of the most incredible bird sightings in North Carolina's ornithological history, an adult Tahiti Petrel was seen from a Seabirding pelagic in the Gulf Stream out of Hatteras (*Dare*) 29 May 2018. The NCBRC received and unanimously accepted a written description from Ed Corey with photos from Peter Flood and Kate Sutherland. This record represents the first record of this species for the Atlantic Ocean, let alone North Carolina, and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) (18-16) The NCBRC received a written report and photographs from Kyle Kittelberger of a Common Ringed Plover first discovered at Pea Island NWR (*Dare*) on 12 October 2018. The committee was impressed by the quality of the documentation of this notoriously difficult species. This record represents the second for North Carolina. It is already on the Definitive List.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) (18-17) The NCBRC unanimously accepted a written report with photos from Steve Ritt of an individual of this species discovered near Harbinger (*Currituck*) on 22 December 2018 and remaining present for several weeks afterwards. This record represents the first for North Carolina, and by virtue of submitted photographs it is placed on the Definitive List.

Golden-crowned Sparrow, 28 Dec 2018, Harbinger, NC. Photo by Bob Lewis

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*) (18-18) Documentation of a subadult Kirtland's Warbler seen at Ridge Junction Overlook (*Yancey/Buncombe*) from 25 September 2018 through 2 October 2018, with written documentation by Kent Fiala and Trevor Sleight and photos by Fiala, was unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This bird was seen by many birders during its stay. This represents the eighth record for North Carolina, all but one of which have been in the fall.

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) (18-20) The committee unanimously accepted a report of this species with written documentation by Jacob Farmer and photos by Farmer and Audrey Whitlock of a bird seen from shore in Nags Head (*Dare*) on 26 December 2018. This represents the 3rd record of this species in North Carolina, but the first time it has been photographed in the state. By virtue of those submitted photos this species is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) (18-21) Photographs taken by Jeff Pippen of an individual of this species seen at North River Farms (*Carteret*) between 30 September 2018 and 3 October 2018 were unanimously accepted by the NCBRC. This represents the fourth record of this species in the state.

Townsend's Warbler, 30 Sep 2018, Carteret Co, NC. Photo by Martin Wall

Not Accepted. The following reports were judged to be not accepted.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*) (18-02) The NCBRC considered a report with a single photo of a bird observed near Duck *(Dare*) on 3 September 2017 that the observer reported as a Yellow-legged Gull. While the committee noted that the individual was certainly interesting, members ultimately decided that the evidence was not sufficient to accept this potential first state record. Members cited the lack of additional photos, in particular those that would show the spread wing, and the similarity of this individual to locally common Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Unresolved. The committee considered a report with illustrations of a Townsend's Warbler in *Mecklenburg*. There was some confusion with regard to the individual in *Carteret,* and the committee will re-consider the former in in 2019.

Summary

With this round of voting, Common Swift, Tahiti Petrel, and Golden-crowned Sparrow are added to the Definitive List, and Black Guillemot is moved from the Provisional List to the Definitive List. The total number of accepted species from North Carolina is now 484 (+3 over the final 2017 list) of which 470 are Definitive (+4 over the final 2017 list), two are considered Not Established, and 12 are Provisional (-1 over the final 2017 list).

Literature Cited

LeGrand, H., J. Haire, N. Swick, and T. Howard. 2016. Birds of North Carolina: their Distribution and Abundance. http://ncbirds.carolinabirdclub.org/

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Fall 2018, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

**All italicized place names are counties.*

Greater White-fronted Goose: One at Lake Junaluska, *Haywood* NC, 26 Jul and 23 Aug (Connie Wulkowicz, m. obs.) was unusual for late summer / early fall. Two were seen at the traditional goose gathering site where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd, *Washington* NC, 18 Nov (Michael McCloy, Dwayne Martin) and 8 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.).

Cackling Goose: Found inside flocks of much larger Canada Geese was one along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, *Hyde* NC, 10 Nov (Derb Carter) and three where US-64 crosses Beasley Rd, *Washington* NC, 18 Nov (Michael McCloy, Dwayne Martin).

Trumpeter Swan: An adult photographed at Alligator River NWR, *Dare* NC, 17 Nov (Jeff Lewis, Dwayne Martin) was a first for Dare County.

Tundra Swan: Two at Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, the morning of 15 Nov (Eddie Owens) were locally unusual, probably the same two individuals seen that afternoon at nearby Falls Lake, *Durham* NC, (Kyle Kittelberger). Flocks of eight seen on Lake Julian, *Buncombe* NC, 14 Nov (Clifton Avery, Simon Thompson, et al.) and flying south over Lake Wheeler, *Wake* NC, 25 Nov (Owens, et al.) were unusual for those sites outside the coastal plain—was the same wandering flock responsible for both sightings?

Eurasian Wigeon: One at Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 16 Sep (John & Paula Wright, m. obs.) was somewhat early. Up to two were seen at that site 28 Sep through 17 Nov (Al Hooks, m. obs.) with one continuing into winter. One photographed from the Haulover Day Use Area, *Dare* NC, 17 Nov (Mark Kosiewski, et al.) was unusual for the brackish water of the Pamlico Sound. Two drakes were seen on Fishburne Pond at Donnelley WMA, *Colleton* SC, 25-27 Nov (David Youngblood).

Common Eider: The first reports this fall involved a first-year drake photographed at Murrells Inlet, *Georgetown* SC, 11 Nov (Ken Oeser) and a hen photographed from Jeanette's Pier, *Dare* NC, 12 Nov (Michael Gosselin, Audrey Whitlock). Sightings of one to three eiders were made at multiple sites along the Outer Banks mid-November into winter. Three around the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, *Carteret* NC, 29 Nov (Alain Robert) was a notable count for that site away from the ocean.

Surf Scoter: Inland sightings included three on Lake Junaluska, *Haywood* NC, 19 Oct (Connie Wulkowicz, et al.); a hen on Lake Townsend, *Guilford* NC, 19 Oct (Henry Link); a hen at Charles D. Owen Park, *Buncombe* NC, 29 Oct through 2 Nov (Tim Carstens, m. obs.); and an adult drake on Lake Hartwell near Clemson, *Pickens* SC, 15 Nov (Kevin Kubach).

Black Scoter: Four hens on Lake Julian, *Buncombe* NC, 3 Nov (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.) was a remarkable count for the mountain region. Notable for the Piedmont were three, one drake and two hens, on Mountain Island Lake, *Mecklenburg* NC, 13 Nov (Kevin Metcalf); two hens on Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, 15 Nov (Dale Lambert); an adult drake at Price Park in Greensboro, *Guilford* NC, 18 Nov (Matt Wangerin); and a hen on Lake Johnson, *Wake* NC, 18-20 Nov (Michael McCloy, m. obs.). A report of 12,

including four adult drakes, in the Mountain Creek arm of Lake Norman, *Catawba* NC, made by hunters, 13 Nov (Ben Burress, et al.) would represent a new inland high count if accurate.

Common Goldeneye: Three on Lake Osceola, *Henderson* NC, 16 Nov (Ron Selvey, m. obs.) was a good count for the mountain region. A hen photographed on a shopping center pond near the University of NC at Charlotte, *Mecklenburg* NC, 21 Nov (Scott Partridge) was unusual for such an urban area.

Common Merganser: Seven continued from summer on Big Laurel Creek, *Madison* NC, 1 Sep (Charles Donnelly).

Horned Grebe: Three on Lake Keowee, *Oconee* SC, 16 Aug (Don Lenahan) were unusual for August, probably early southbound migrants.

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals on Randleman Lake, *Randolph* NC, 20 Nov (Jeff Souther) and in Rodanthe, *Dare* NC, 28 Nov (Karen Lebing) were good finds.

Eared Grebe: One was seen on the Salt Pond at Cape Point, *Dare* NC, 7-18 Nov (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.).

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen at Hunting Island SP, *Beaufort* SC, 2 Sep (Jeff Kidd); on East Kiawah Island, *Charleston* SC, 5 Nov (Michael Gamble); visiting a feeder in Mt Pleasant, *Charleston* SC, 9-14 Nov (Craig Watson, m. obs.); and visiting a feeder in Waves, *Dare* NC, 28 Nov (Karen Lebing).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Like many migratory songbirds, the cuckoo's fall passage through the Carolinas continued later into the fall than is typical, possibly because of a stagnant weather pattern over the region during much of September. Dozens of sightings were made in November this year, considerably more than the two or three made in an average November. Individuals in Southern Shores, *Dare* NC, 25 Nov (Al Hooks, Audrey Whitlock) and at Fish Haul Creek Park, *Beaufort* SC, 25 Nov (Aaron Palmieri, et al.) were the latest.

Common Nighthawk: One seen and heard making its peent call at Donnelley WMA, *Colleton* SC, 18 Nov (Carl & Cathy Miller) was extremely late.

Chimney Swift: One in flight over the east end of Kiawah Island, *Charleston* SC, 8 Nov (Michael Gamble) was the last one reported this fall.

Clapper Rail: One photographed in a yard in southwest Charlotte, *Mecklenburg* NC, 1 Oct (Kam Myers) was likely a migrant forced down by inclement weather.

Purple Swamphen: Requiring review by the SC BRC was the report with photographs of an apparent Purple Swamphen on Bulls Island, Cape Romain NWR, *Charleston* SC,

26 Oct (David McLean, Cynthia Worthington). If accepted, the report would become the first official record of this exotic, established in south Flordia, anywhere in the Carolinas.

Black-necked Stilt: Two on Bird Shoal in the Rachel Carson Reserve, *Carteret* NC, 14 Aug (Amy Padgett) at one in a flooded field at Ogden Park, *New Hanover* NC, 16 Sep (Sam Cooper) were unusual for those areas.

American Avocet: Following the passage of Hurricane Michael, two were seen at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, 12 Oct (Ricky Davis) and five were photographed at Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, 14 Oct (Eddie Owens). Three on the north side of Mason Inlet, *New Hanover* NC, 7 Nov (Sam Cooper) were unusual for that site.

American Oystercatcher: One photographed at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, during the passage of Hurricane Florence, 15 Sep (Alec Hopping, Logan Kahle, m. obs.) was a fantastic find, as there are only four previous inland records in NC.

American Golden-Plover: About a dozen were reported this fall. Two at Lake Julian, *Buncombe* NC, following the passage of Hurricane Florence, 16 Sep (Simon Thompson, et al.) were unusual for that site. One hung around for a while in the grassy area next to the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal, *Carteret* NC, 24 Sep through 1 Oct (Martin Wall, m. obs.). One seen along River Rd at Alligator River NWR, *Dare* NC, 17-22 Nov (m. obs.) was somewhat late.

Wilson's Plover: Four lingered on the east end of Shackleford Banks, *Carteret* NC, until at least 11 Nov (John Fussell, et al.).

Common Ringed Plover: Accepted by the NC BRC (see page 19) was the report of one seen and photographed at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 12-13 Oct (Kyle Kittelberger, m. obs.). This report provides the second official record of this Eurasian stray in NC.

Long-billed Curlew: One seen on the east end of Shackleford Banks, *Carteret* NC, 7 Oct (Matt Spangler) through 11 Nov (John Fussell, et al.) was likely the same individual seen at that site last fall.

Bar-tailed Godwit: One seen on the east end of Shackleford Banks, *Carteret* NC, 10 Nov (Jamie Adams) and 11 Nov (John Fussell, et al.) was likely the same individual seen at that site the past two fall seasons. Amazingly, ***two*** Bar-tailed Godwits were seen at that site a week later, 18 Nov (Haven Wiley).

Hudsonian Godwit: Two were seen around North Pond, Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 21-27 Sep (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) with one continuing there until 5 Nov (m. obs.). One on the beach on the north side of Oregon Inlet, *Dare* NC, 18 Nov (Ed Corey, et al.) was somewhat late.

Ruddy Turnstone: Following a period of heavy rain in the French Broad River Valley up to two were seen at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln, *Henderson* NC, 1-3 Aug (Kevin Burke, m. obs.) and three were found in flooded grass fields east of Brevard, *Transylvania* NC, 3 Aug (Bob Butler, et al.).

Stilt Sandpiper: Four in a flooded grass field just east of Brevard, *Transylvania* NC, following heavy rain, 3 Aug (Claire Herzog, Mike Judd) were a first for that county.

Curlew Sandpiper: An adult molting out of breeding plumage photographed at South Point on Ocracoke Island, *Hyde* NC, 16 Aug (Chelsea Weithman, et al.) was almost certainly the same individual seen in adjacent Dare County in late July.

Dunlin: Individuals in an agricultural field at Warren Wilson College, *Buncombe* NC, 2-5 Nov (Jamie Adams, m. obs.) and at Lake Junaluska, *Haywood* NC, 15 Nov (Connie Wulkowicz) were unusual for those sites.

Baird's Sandpiper: One seen in an agricultural field at Warren Wilson College, *Buncombe* NC, 1 Nov (Aaron Steed, et al.) through 5 Nov (m. obs.) was a great find.

White-rumped Sandpiper: Good counts for fall were 21 at North River Preserve, *Carteret* NC, 9 Sep (John Fussell, et al.) and 12 along Hooper Ln, *Henderson* NC, following Hurricane Florence, 16 Sep (Vicky Burke, et al.). A juvenile photographed at the Cape Point Campground, *Dare* NC, 14 Nov (Michael Gosselin) was late.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Sightings made at Super Sod farms included two in *Martin* NC, 4 Aug (Ricky Davis); up to two in *Orangeburg* SC, 2-23 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton, m. obs.); and up to three in *Henderson* NC, 11-17 Sep (Kevin Burke, m. obs.).

Pectoral Sandpiper: 200 in the flooded fields at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln, *Henderson* NC, following a period of heavy rain, 3 Aug (Ryan Lubbers, Jay Wherley) was the high count this fall.

Short-billed Dowitcher: One at the Super Sod farm in *Martin* NC, 4 Aug (Ricky Davis) and three in a flooded soybean field in *Lenoir* NC, 25 Aug (Stacy & Natalie Barbour) were possible firsts for those counties. Following a period of heavy rain in the French Broad River Valley up to eight were seen along Hooper Ln, *Henderson* NC, 1-5 Aug (m. obs.) and four were photographed in a flooded field just east of Brevard, *Transylvania* NC, 4 Aug (Bob Butler, et al.).

Solitary Sandpiper: One photographed on the Calabash River in Sunset Beach, *Brunswick* NC, 3 Nov (David Wilson) was late.

Willet: Following a period of heavy rain in the French Broad River Valley three were seen along Hooper Ln, *Henderson*, 3 Aug (Wayne Forsythe, et al.) and three were seen in a flooded field just east of Brevard, *Transylvania*, 3 Aug (Claire Herzog, et al.).

Wilson's Phalarope: Six at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access), *Jasper* SC, 17 Aug (Steve Calver, et al.) was a great count. Individuals were photographed at Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 14-17 Aug (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.); at Cane Creek Park, *Union* NC, 17-19 Aug (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.); on the East Beach of Kiawah Island, *Charleston* SC, 31 Aug through 6 Sep (Kristin Attinger, m. obs.); on the spit at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 5 Sep (Jamie Adams); and at Santee Coastal Reserve, *Charleston* SC, 6 Sep (Joshua Stone) and 7 Sep (Charles Donnelly).

Red-necked Phalarope: Multiple sightings were made at inland sites following the passage of Hurricane Florence in mid-September—one at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, 15 Sep (Alec Hopping); one or two on Salem Lake, *Forsyth* NC, 15-16 Sep (Nathan Gatto, m. obs.); 23, a new record high count for the mountains, at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Ln, *Henderson* NC, 16 Sep (Simon Thompson, et al.); two at the south end of Lake Marion, *Berkeley* SC, 16 Sep (Mark Vukovich); one at Lake Townsend, *Guilford* NC, 16-17 Sep (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.); four at Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, 17 Sep (Jamie Adams, m. obs.); and one along Meadow View Rd, *Orange* NC, 17 Sep (Ann Carter, m. obs.).

Parasitic Jaeger: Related to the passage of Hurricane Florence were the sightings of an adult at Jordan Lake, *Chatham* NC, 14 Sep (Mark Kosiewski, Matt Spangler) and an immature bird at the same site 17 Sep (Jelmer Poelstra).

Jaeger species: Jaegers not identified to species were seen over three inland reservoirs following the passage of Hurricane Florence in mid-September—over Lake Marion in *Orangeburg* SC, 16 Sep (Matt Malin, Mark Vukovich); over Lake Townsend, *Guilford* NC, 16 Sep (Andrew Thornton); and over Lake Murray, *Lexington* SC, 18 Sep (Irvin Pitts, et al.).

Sabine's Gull: An adult on Falls Lake, *Durham* and *Wake* NC, 18 Sep (Kyle Kittelberger, m. obs.) was the only one reported in the Carolinas this fall.

Black-headed Gull: Individuals were seen and photographed at Mason Inlet, *New Hanover* NC, 5 Nov (Jamie Adams) and 25 Nov (Sam Cooper); at Pettigrew SP, *Washington* NC, 14 Nov (Greg Hudson); and at the Georgetown WTP, *Georgetown* SC, 22 Nov (Ritch Lilly) into winter.

Laughing Gull: A first-winter bird photographed in Boone, *Watauga* NC, 17 Sep (Guy McGrane, et al.) was unusual for the NC High Country.

Franklin's Gull: 37 photographed circling in tight formation over Ecusta Pond, *Transylvania* NC, 2 Nov (Michael Plauché, et al.) was an unprecedented count for the Carolinas, shattering the previous record high count of seven.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: An adult photographed at Lake Junaluska, *Haywood* NC, following the passage of Hurricane Florence, 16-17 Sep (Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, m.

obs.) was a great find for the mountain region. 82 around fishing trawlers off the east end of Shackleford Banks, *Carteret* NC, 11 Nov (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count for a site away from the Outer Banks.

Glaucous Gull: A first-winter bird was seen at Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 25 Nov (Jeff Lewis) into winter (m. obs.).

Brown Noddy: Two were seen during a chartered pelagic trip out of Hatteras, *Dare* NC, 31 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Sooty Tern: Inland sightings following the passage of Hurricane Florence included an adult in Ogden Park, *New Hanover* NC, 15 Sep (Sam Cooper); a juvenile over Lake Julian, *Buncombe* NC, 16 Sep (John Koon, m. obs.); and a juvenile over Lake Norman, *Lincoln* and *Mecklenburg* NC, 17 Sep (Kevin Metcalf, et al.). A juvenile at Ft Moultrie, *Charleston* SC, 11 Oct (Edward Patten) was the only report related to the passage of Hurricane Michael.

Least Tern: One over Lake Norman in *Lincoln* NC, 15-17 Sep (Kevin Metcalf) was the farthest inland of the inland sightings made following the passage of Hurricane Florence.

Gull-billed Tern: 140 at the Davis Impoundment, *Carteret* NC, 8 Aug (Chandra Biggerstaff) was a notable post-breeding aggregation.

Common Tern: Several high counts were made at inland reservoirs in NC following the passage of Hurricane Florence, including 200 at Lake Norman, *Mecklenburg*, 15 Sep (Rob Van Epps); 85 at Lake Brandt, *Guilford*, 15 Sep (Jeffrey Turner); 50 at Lake Hickory, *Caldwell*, 15 Sep (Caroline Martin); 100 at Lake Junaluska, *Haywood*, 16 Sep (Bob Butler, Simon Thompson); 55 at Ecusta Pond, *Transylvania*, 16 Sep (Mike Judd, Michael Plauché); and 55 at Falls Lake, *Durham*, 18 Sep (Ed Corey, et al.).

Arctic Tern: Following the passage of Hurricane Florence, individuals were reported from Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, 15 Sep (Alec Hopping, m. obs.); Harris Lake, *Wake* NC, 15 Sep (Sam Jolly); and Falls Lake, *Wake* NC, 18 Sep (Brian Bockhahn).

Royal Tern: Sightings were made at sites inland to the Triad following the passage of Hurricane Florence in mid-September. High counts at inland reservoirs were 115 at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, 15 Sep (Alec Hopping, Logan Kahle); 41 at Harris Lake, *Wake* NC, 15 Sep (Sam Jolly); 25 at Falls Lake, *Wake* NC, 15 Sep (Ed Corey); ten at Jordan Lake, *Chatham* NC, 15 Sep (Roger Shaw); nine at Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, 15 Sep (Edward Landi); and 20 at the southeast end of Lake Marion, *Berkeley* SC, 16 Sep (Matt Malin, Mark Vulkovich). Farthest inland were individuals over Lake Brandt, *Guilford* NC, 15 Sep (Andrew Thornton, et al.); over Belews Lake, *Stokes* NC, 16 Sep (Jesse Anderson); over Salem Lake, *Forsyth* NC, 16 Sep (David & Susan Disher, m. obs.); and over Lake Townsend, *Guilford* NC, 16-18 Sep (Thornton, m. obs.). Also inland

were eight at the Vandemark Sod farm, *Nash* NC, 14 Sep (Ricky Davis); four at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center in *Darlington* SC, 14 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton); one at Forest Lake, *Florence* SC, 15 Sep (Smolen-Morton); and one at Lake Robinson, *Darlington* SC, 16 Sep (Smolen-Morton).

Sandwich Tern: Sightings made at inland reservoirs following the passage of Hurricane Florence included one at Forest Lake, *Florence* SC, 14 Sep (Shawn Smolen-Morton); one at Lake Waccamaw, *Columbus* NC, 14 Sep (Alec Hopping, Logan Kahle); one at Jordan Lake, *Chatham* NC, 14 Sep (Mark Kosiewski, Matt Spangler); one at Lake Wheeler, *Wake* NC, 15 Sep (Edward Landi, et al.); up to eight at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, 15-16 (Hopping, Kahle, m. obs.); one at Harris Lake, *Wake* NC, 15-16 Sep (Sam Jolly, m. obs.); two at Lake Crabtree, *Wake* NC, 16 Sep (Eddie Owens); and one at Falls Lake, *Wake* NC, 16 Sep (Ed Corey, m. obs.). 2000 at Cape Point, *Dare* NC, 18 Oct (George Armistead, Jeff Pippen) was an amazing count.

Black Skimmer: Inland sightings following Hurricane Florence included a molting adult photographed at the southeast end of Lake Marion, *Berkeley* SC, 16 Sep (Matt Malin, Mark Vukovich) and an immature bird seen near the dam on High Rock Lake, *Rowan* NC, 17 Sep (Steve Coggin). 3,700+ at Mason Inlet, *New Hanover* NC, 25 Nov (Sam Cooper) was a remarkable concentration.

White-tailed Tropicbird: Sightings included a juvenile photographed from a NOAA vessel 60 miles south-southeast of Cape Lookout, *Carteret* NC, 5 Aug (Doug Gochfeld, Tom Johnson); a juvenile photographed from a cruise ship 173 miles east-southeast of Waves, *Dare* NC, (Rob Dickerson); and two, an adult and a juvenile, on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, *Dare* NC, 25 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Red-billed Tropicbird: Individual juvenile birds were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, *Dare* NC, 25 Aug and 8 Sep (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: One on Mountain Island Lake, *Gaston* NC, 14-15 Nov (Kevin Metcalf) was a good find inland.

Pacific Loon: One on Kerr Lake, *Vance* NC, 22-25 Nov (Jeffrey Blalock, m. obs.) was a great find because all sightings on Kerr Lake in recent years have been made on the Virginia side of the border.

Common Loon: 677 on Falls Lake, *Durham* NC, 14 Nov (Kyle Kittelberger) and 819 there 15 Nov (Kittelberger) were incredible counts for an inland site.

White-faced Storm-Petrel: One was photographed from a NOAA research vessel 38 miles east of Oregon Inlet, *Dare* NC, 5 Aug (Doug Gochfeld, Tom Johnson).

Trindade Petrel: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, *Dare* NC, 2 Aug and 24 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.). Requiring review by the NC BRC is an eBird report,

with photographs, of an apparent Trindade Petrel in flight over Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, during the passage of Hurricane Florence, 15 Sep (Alec Hopping, Logan Kahle). If reviewed and accepted, this report would become the Carolina's first inland record of this rare pelagic species.

Black-capped Petrel: 58 seen from a NOAA research vessel 107 miles southeast of Fripp Island, *Beaufort* SC, 4 Aug (Doug Gochfeld, Tom Johnson) was a notable count for SC.

Cory's Shearwater: There was a noticeable mortality event associated with the passage of Hurricane Florence in mid-September, with nine moribund birds found on Atlantic Beach, *Carteret* NC, 19-20 Sep (Martha Mayo, John Fussell) and five moribund birds found on North Topsail Beach, *Onslow* NC, 25 Sep (Gilbert Grant).

Sooty Shearwater: Requiring review by the NC BRC was the report of one seen over Lake Wylie, *Mecklenburg* NC, following the passage of Hurricane Florence, 15 Sep (Taylor Piephoff) and 16 Sep (Ron Clark). If reviewed and accepted, this sighting would provide the third inland record for NC.

Wood Stork: Far inland was one at Dobbins Farm, *Anderson* SC, 31 Jul through 13 Aug (Linda Montgomery, m. obs.) and three, an adult and two juveniles, at Cane Creek Park, *Union* NC, 14 Aug (Matt Janson, Martina Nordstrand). A juvenile at Alligator River NWR, *Dare* NC, until 10 Oct (Karen Lebing) was late for a site so far north.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Two were reported this fall, both associated with the passage of Hurricane Michael—a juvenile photographed over Myrtle Beach, *Horry* SC, 10 Oct (Ronnie Clark) and one seen over Kure Beach, *New Hanover* NC, 12 Oct (Mark Galizio)

Masked Booby: Sightings included a near-adult photographed 81 miles east-northeast of Oregon Inlet, *Dare* NC, 15 Aug (Rob Dickerson); two, an adult and a subadult, seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, *Dare* NC, 25 Aug (Brian Patteson, et al.); an adult seen from a research vessel 138 miles southeast of Cape Fear, *Brunswick* NC, 28 Aug (Catherine McFadden); an adult seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, 6 Oct (Patteson, et al.); and a sub-adult photographed on Frying Pan Tower, 32 miles southeast of Cape Lookout, *Brunswick* NC, 29 Oct (Richard Neal). One wonders if just one or two individuals were responsible for all six sightings.

Anhinga: One seen and photographed on Lake Townsend, *Guilford* NC, 25 Nov through 3 Dec (William & Shellie Falls, m. obs.) was unusual for a site so far inland, especially so late in the season.

American White Pelican: 77 in flight over the dam on Lake Murray, *Lexington* SC, 18 Sep (Irvin Pitts, et al.) was a notable count of flyover migrants. One on Jordan Lake, *Chatham* NC, following the passage of Hurricane Michael, 12 Oct (Mark Kosiewski, m. obs.) was unusual for that site.

Brown Pelican: Individuals on Coddle Creek Reservoir, *Cabarrus* NC, 6-14 Aug (Lila Gandy, m. obs.) and 13 Sep (Randall McCarthy); and on Lake Murray, *Lexington* SC, 18-19 Aug (Kent Bedenbaugh, m. obs.) and 27 Aug (Zach Steinhauser) were unusual for those inland sites.

Great Blue Heron: A melanistic individual was seen and photographed at Forest Lake, *Florence* SC, 24 Nov into December (Shawn Smolen-Morton).

Great Blue Heron, 24 Nov 2018, Florence, SC. Photo by Shawn Smolen-Morton

The white-morph Great Blue Heron seen in the French Broad River Valley in *Henderson* NC, 17-25 Jul (Wayne Forsythe) was re-found along NC-191 just east of Mills River, 14 Aug (Forsythe).

Reddish Egret: Three around the east end of Shackleford Banks, *Carteret* NC, 12 Aug (John Fussell, et al.) through 8 Oct (Matt Spangler) were notable for NC.

Roseate Spoonbill: The epic irruption that occurred during the summer began to recede in early August, but a few spoonbills wandered around the Piedmont into early October, and good numbers lingered at sites along the SC coast into winter. Individuals were possible county firsts near Old Santee Canal Park, *Berkeley* SC, 1 Aug (Brad Sale, m. obs.); at the north end of Coddle Creek Reservoir, *Cabarrus* NC, 2-5 Aug (Eric Keith, m. obs.); along the Broad River in *Cherokee* SC, 25 Aug (Lisa Jenkins); and at River Park North in Greenville, *Pitt* NC, 7 Sep (Cindy McCraw). Three continued from summer at Cape Point, *Dare* NC, until 8 Sep (Kyle Kittelberger). Nine on Bald Head Island, *Brunswick* NC, 18 Aug (*fide* Derb Carter) and six at the Rachel Carson Reserve, *Carteret* NC, 18 Sep (Paula Gillikin) were good counts for NC. One was seen again in the Crabtree Creek Wetland in east Raleigh, *Wake* NC, after a near three-month absence, 7 Oct (Alysia Richard). Individuals in the Pine Island Unit of Santee NWR, *Clarendon* SC, 30 Oct (Irvin Pitts, et al.) and at Greenfield Lake, *New Hanover* NC, 30 Oct through 10 Nov (Tim Armstrong, m. obs.) were unusual for those sites. One seen at Twin Lakes in Sunset Beach, *Brunswick* NC, 25 Nov (Sarah Towne, m. obs.) was the latest fall sighting ever made in NC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: One seen just south of Newland, *Avery* NC, at ~3800 feet above sea level, 12 Aug (Thomas McNeil) was unusual for our northern mountains. Three along I-73 in north *Richmond* NC, 5 Aug (Nathan & Sarah Gatto) and up to three along Durbin Rd in *Laurens* SC, 14-17 Aug (Steve Cox, m. obs.) were unusual for those areas.

Golden Eagle: Individuals were seen by hawk-watchers at Hanging Rock SP, *Stokes* NC, 19 Sep (Brian Bockhahn) and at Grandfather Mountain, *Avery* NC, 29 Sep (Jesse Pope, et al.). An immature bird was seen by many at Webb Wildlife Center, *Hampton* SC, 30 Oct and 14 Nov (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.).

Broad-winged Hawk: 4559 tallied at the hawk-watch on Grandfather Mountain, *Avery* NC, 29 Sep (Jesse Pope, et al.) was an excellent one-day total.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A moribund individual collected by the NC Museum of Natural Sciences after colliding with a window in north Raleigh, *Wake* NC, 27 Nov (*fide* John Gerwin) was unusual for that urban area.

Ash-throated Flycatcher: One photographed along Buster Newbern Rd in *Currituck* NC, 18 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was the only one reported this fall.

Tropical Kingbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Tropical Kingbird at Huntington Beach SP, *Georgetown* SC, 12 Oct (Erinn Szarek, m. obs.). If accepted, this sighting would become SC's first official record of this very rare vagrant, though a report of one at Santee Coastal Reserve, *Charleston* SC, 7-8 Feb 2009 (m. obs.) is still pending review.

Western Kingbird: Individuals were seen and photographed at Holly Shelter Game Land, *Pender* NC, 7 Sep (Rebecca Hart); at Ft Moultrie, *Charleston* SC, 15 Sep (Pam Ford, Craig Watson); at Donnelly WMA, *Colleton* SC, 17 Nov (Steve Rhodes); in south Georgetown, *Georgetown* SC, 23 Nov into winter (Watson, m. obs.); and at Pawleys Plantation Golf & Country Club, *Georgetown* SC, 26 Nov (Mary Fenton, Steve Salisbury).

Gray Kingbird: One photographed at Mackay Island NWR, *Currituck* NC, 19 Sep (Betty Sue Cohen) was a great find for our northernmost coast and a possible county first.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Individuals were seen and photographed at Lake Conestee Nature Park, *Greenville* SC, 18-21 Aug (Paul Serridge, m. obs.); in a yard just southwest of Franklin, *Macon* NC, 21 Aug (Chayse Davis); and in a yard just northeast of Hillsborough, *Orange* NC, 31 Aug (Bert Fisher, m. obs.).

Willow Flycatcher: One seen along Burnt Mill Creek in Wilmington, *New Hanover* NC, 24 Aug (Sam Cooper) was unusual for southeast NC.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One at Riverbend Park, *Catawba* NC, 24-29 Nov (Dwayne Martin) was quite late.

Bank Swallow: Two seen at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 3 Nov (David Weesner) and photographed there 4 Nov (Jamie Adams) were very late. Bank Swallows are less likely to linger into late fall than other swallows.

Cave Swallow: Sightings involved one over Greenfield Lake, *New Hanover* NC, 3-5 Nov (Sam Cooper, m. obs.); three at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 3 Nov (Derb Carter); 12 at Ft Fisher, 4 Nov (Jamie Adams); and up to two over Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, *Georgetown* SC, 16 Nov into December (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.).

Barn Swallow: Like many other migrant songbirds this fall, Barn Swallows were still moving down the coast in November. A total of 25 at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 4 Nov (Jamie Adams) was a great count for that late date. One over Oak Hollow Lake, *Guilford* NC, 20 Nov (Andrew Thornton) was extremely late for a site in the Piedmont.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: There was a moderate irruption of this species into the Carolinas this fall, beginning in mid-to-late September and continuing into winter. 28 at Nags Head Woods, *Dare* NC, 17 Nov (Jacob Farmer, et al.) and ten+ at River Forks Recreation Area, *Anderson* SC, 21 Nov (Andy Norris, Steve Patterson) were the state high counts.

Marsh Wren: One seen and photographed at Warren Wilson College, *Buncombe* NC, 5-6 Nov (John Koon, m. obs.) was late for a site in the mountain region.

Swainson's Thrush: Seven sightings were made in November this year, the latest of which was one well-studied as it ate red cedar berries at the Theodore Roosevelt Natural Area in Pine Knoll Shores, *Carteret* NC, 24 Nov (John Fussell).

Wood Thrush: One was photographed at Savannah NWR, *Jasper* SC, on the very late date of 28 Nov (James Asmuth).

Purple Finch: A moderate irruption began in mid-October when Purple Finches started showing up at feeders and other sites across the Carolinas.

Snow Bunting: Individuals were seen and photographed along the Nags Head Causeway, *Dare* NC, 16-17 Nov (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.); foraging in the grass near the 14th tee at Pawley Plantation Golf & Country Club, *Georgetown* SC, 26 Nov (Mary Fenton, Steve Salisbury); and on the rock jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet, *Dare* NC, 26 Nov (Whitlock).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Dozens of sightings were made along the Carolina coast from late September to early November. One seen and photographed along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* NC, 30 Sep (John Becker, Jeffrey Greco) was very unusual for a site in the Piedmont.

Lark Sparrow: It was a good fall for this species in the Carolinas, with at least a dozen sightings made. As usual, most sightings were made at sites along the coast—one at North Pond, Pea Island NWR, *Dare* NC, 9 Aug (David Littlepage); one in Wiggins, *Colleton* SC, 12 Aug (Carl Miller); one in Avon, *Dare* NC, 19 Aug (Scott Baron); one at North Pond again 28-31 Aug (Alan Dupuis, m. obs.); one in Waves, *Dare* NC, 30 Aug through 1 Sep and 19 Sep (Karen Lebing); two at North River Farms, *Carteret* NC, 3 Oct (Sam Cooper); one at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 6 Oct (David Weesner); one at Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve, *Charleston* SC, 12 Oct (Keith McCullough, et al.); one at Ft Fisher again 13-15 Oct (Sara Meissner, m. obs.) and 18 Nov (Meissner); and two in Alder Branch, *Camden* NC, 29 Nov (James Harrison). Individuals along Mid Pines Rd, *Wake* NC, 25 Aug (Harry LeGrand); at Schenck Forest, *Wake* NC, 8 Sep (Jan

Mouro, Jeri Smart); and at Warren Wilson College, *Buncombe* NC, 4-6 Nov (Bob Butler, m. obs.) were especially unusual for sites so far from the coast.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Several dozen sightings were made this fall starting 29 Sep, most at sites in the mountains and western Piedmont. A few of the higher counts were eight at Warren Wilson College, *Buncombe* NC, 18 Oct (Aaron Steed) and 23 Oct (Jay Wherley); six at Valle Crucis Community Park, *Watauga* NC, 24 Oct (Steve Dowlan, et al.); and four at Valle Crucis, 28 Oct (Sam Cooper).

Yellow-breasted Chat: One photographed in the parking lot for the NC Aquarium at Ft Fisher, *New Hanover* NC, 17 Nov (Sam Cooper) was late.

Bobolink: One photographed at Ramp 49 in Frisco, *Dare* NC, 10 Nov (Karen Lebing, et al.) was late.

Ovenbird: One photographed at Hunting Island SP, *Beaufort* SC, 22 Nov (Matt Johnson) was quite late.

Golden-winged Warbler: One photographed in a yard in Southern Shores, *Dare* NC, 27-28 Sep (James Gould) was unusual for the Outer Banks.

Prothonotary Warbler: Several were still moving down the coast in mid-October this year, including one photographed at Greenfield Park, *New Hanover* NC, 18 Oct (Sara Meissner).

Swainson's Warbler: One photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk, *Dare* NC, 18 Oct (Lucas Bobay) was very unusual for the Outer Banks and also quite late.

Nashville Warbler: About a half-dozen sightings were made in early November when waves of late migrants were still passing through. One seen on the east end of Ocean Isle Beach, *Brunswick* NC, 18 Nov (Taylor Piephoff) was especially late, however, possibly attempting to over-winter in the area.

Connecticut Warbler: Individuals were seen at Prairie Ridge Ecostation, *Wake* NC, 7-9 Sep (Brian O'Shea, m. obs.); at Mayo River SP, *Rockingham* NC, 11 Sep (Tony & Cara Woods); and in Rosman, *Transylvania* NC, 7 Oct (Claire Herzog, et al.).

Mourning Warbler: About a half-dozen were reported this fall. A first-year male captured at the banding station on Kiawah Island, *Charleston* SC, 5 Sep (Meredith Heather, et al.) was the most noteworthy, as there are only a few records in SC.

Kentucky Warbler: One in Southern Shores, *Dare* NC, 25-28 Aug (Jim Gould, m. obs.) was unusual for the Outer Banks.

American Redstart: Redstarts were among the late waves of migrant songbirds noted this fall, with over a dozen sightings made in November. An adult male seen in a yard in north Asheville, *Buncombe* NC, 5 Nov (Simon Thompson) was very late for a site in the mountains. The latest to depart were individuals at North River Preserve, *Carteret* NC, 18 Nov (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Steve Howell) and at Savannah NWR, *Jasper* SC, 4 Dec (Phil McNeil).

Kirtland's Warbler: All sightings of this species require review by respective BRCs before becoming official records. The Carolina's first "chase-able" Kirtland's Warbler was an immature bird seen and photographed by many along the Blue Ridge Parkway near the entrance to Mt Mitchell SP, *Buncombe* and *Yancey* NC, over the span of ten days, 24 Sep through 3 Oct (Trevor Sleight, m. obs.). A first-winter bird captured at a banding station on East Kiawah Island, *Charleston* SC, 4 Oct (Nancy Raginski, et al.) would provide SC with its second official record if accepted. From the Fall 2017 period, a first-winter bird was seen and photographed along the Duck Park Boardwalk, *Dare* NC, 2-5 Oct (Pat Draisey, m. obs.). Reportedly the observers were not aware of the bird's rarity until showing photographs to a birder a year later!

Cape May Warbler: Like many other migrant songbirds, this species' passage through the Carolinas extended several weeks later into the fall than is usual. Several dozen sightings were made during the month of November this year, a huge contrast to the average one or two reported in a typical November. One photographed at Cherry Farm in Clemson, *Pickens* SC, 20 Nov (Kevin Kubach) was one of the latest.

Cerulean Warbler: A first-winter female photographed in a yard in Southern Shores, *Dare* NC, 5 Aug (Jeff Lewis) was unusual for the Outer Banks.

Northern Parula: Four along Burnt Mill Creek, *New Hanover* NC, 4 Nov (Sam Cooper) and 8 Nov (Sara Meissner) was a good count for November. One photographed at Lake Julian, *Buncombe* NC, 20 Nov (Steve Barlow) was very late for a site in the mountains.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Like other migrant warblers, sightings of this species continued into early November this year. One photographed in a yard in *Greenville* SC, 22 Nov (Tim Kalbach) was especially late, however.

Yellow Warbler: One at Huntington Beach SP, *Georgetown* SC, 10 Nov (Marcia & Ted Horman) and 22 Nov (Evan Farmer, Brad Sale) was quite late.

Blackpoll Warbler: Because fall migration lasted for several extra weeks this year and Blackpolls are always one of the latest migrants, dozens of sightings were made in November. One at Ebenezer Point at Jordan Lake, *Chatham* NC, 8 Nov (Jelmer Poelstra) was late for a site away from the coast. Four along the Duck Park Boardwalk, *Dare* NC, 17 Nov (Lucas Bobay, et al.) was a remarkable count for that late date. A first-winter female photographed at Forest Lake, *Florence* SC, 25 Nov (Shawn Smolen-Morton) was the latest one reported.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: Several continued into November this year, with a male at Anderson Regional Airport, *Anderson* SC, 16 Nov (Steve Patterson) being the latest.

Townsend's Warbler: Accepted by the NC BRC (see page 20) was one seen and photographed at North River Preserve, *Carteret* NC, 30 Sep (Martin Wall, John Fussell, Steve Howell) through 3 Sep (Sam Cooper). This report provides NC with its fourth official record of this vagrant from the west.

Canada Warbler: One seen and photographed in a yard in Southern Shores, *Dare* NC, 24-29 Aug (Jim Gould, m. obs.) was unusual for the Outer Banks. One seen on a farm in north *Watauga* NC, 25 Oct (Merrill Lynch) was quite late.

Wilson's Warbler: Individuals photographed at Huntington Beach SP, *Georgetown* SC, 28 Nov (Linda Montgomery) and in a yard in Clemson, *Pickens* SC, 4 Dec (Montgomery) were very late.

Summer Tanager: A female photographed in a yard in North Augusta, *Aiken* SC, 3 Nov (Lois Stacey) was the last one reported this fall.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A female photographed at a feeder in Charlotte, *Mecklenburg* NC, 15 Nov (Judy Walker) was quite late.

Indigo Bunting: A male seen and photographed at a feeder north of Asheville, *Buncombe* NC, 19-23 Nov (Steve Semanchuk) was very late for the mountain region.

Corrigenda: The date given for the Ricky Davis' count of 307 Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Buckhorn Reservoir, *Wilson* NC, in the Spring 2018 "Briefs for the Files" was incorrect. The correct date of the sighting was 27 March 2018.

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- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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The Chat

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Cover: Razorbill, 12 February 2019, Dare County, NC
Photo by Greg Hudson

House Wren Breeding Status in the Sandhills of Moore County, North Carolina: Has the Range Expansion Persisted?

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The House Wren's (*Troglodytes aedon*) breeding range expanded to Southern Pines-Pinehurst, the largest micropolitan area in the Sandhills of Moore County, North Carolina (U.S. Census Bureau 2018), in the late 2000s. Two singing males were present in 2008, and in 2009 approximately 20 territories were occupied by singing males, although the number of males that were paired and breeding was undetermined (Southern 2009). Nonetheless, nest sites were confirmed in both years (Southern 2009). Subsequently, this local breeding population in the Southern Pines-Pinehurst micropolitan area has declined (S. Campbell, pers. comm.). Only single males without proof of breeding have been reported at three towns (Aberdeen, Southern Pines, Whispering Pines) within the last two years (2017-2018; eBird: McNair, pers. exam.).

Only one House Wren has been detected in Moore County and two adjacent areas of the Sandhills on any of three BBS routes since the 1990s (Lake Surf in 2012; Sauer et al. 2017), which are primarily located in rural habitats. House Wrens have only attempted to breed at one rural site in this section of south-central NC, of two incomplete nests in boxes at a managed mature Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*) forest (Calloway Forest) in 2017 (Stanback, unpubl. data), near the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area. Thus, confirmed nest records of House Wrens in the Sandhills of Moore County have been confined to urban habitats, including the "core area" of Pinehurst (Southern 2009).

About 25 years earlier, House Wrens were first noted breeding in Fayetteville, the largest metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau 2018) at the boundary of the Sandhills subregion of the Coastal Plain with the upper Coastal Plain of NC in the early 1980s when at least two pairs had become established. Fledged young were first recorded in this area in 1985 (LeGrand 1981, 1982, 1983a,b; 1984, 1986). The urban breeding populations of House Wrens in Southern Pines-Pinehurst and Fayetteville, both at the edge of their current range in the upper Coastal Plain (see LeGrand et al. 2018), probably both arrived from a northeasterly direction where urban populations were first documented in Raleigh over 90 years ago (Pearson 1934, Hader 1969; McNair, submitted ms).

Local, marginal populations at the edge of their breeding range are subject to wide fluctuations in annual abundance. The purpose of this note is to examine whether breeding House Wrens have persisted in urban habitats of the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area since they initially arrived in 2008-2009.

Methods

We sampled the breeding population size of House Wrens at golf courses in Pinehurst (population 15,945; U.S. Census Bureau 2018), Moore County. From 2013-2014, Stanback established 160 nest boxes at five golf courses (Pinehurst Nos. 6, 8, and 9; Country Club of North Carolina Cardinal and Dogwood courses, hereafter CCNC) in Pinehurst Moore County, primarily for the purpose of studying cavity competition between Brown-headed Nuthatches (*Sitta pusilla*) and Carolina Chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*). The nest boxes, both tree- and pole-mounted without predator guards, have 26-mm entrance holes (and are thus unavailable to Eastern Bluebirds [*Sialia sialis*]). House Wrens breed well into the summer, whereas Brown-headed Nuthatches and Carolina Chickadees do not. Four of five of these golf courses are embedded within residential subdivisions, whereas the fifth course (Pinehurst No. 8) is not. Stanback found that House Wrens built a total of one complete nest in these boxes each year from 2014-2016 at two of these golf courses (CCNC-Cardinal course, Pinehurst No. 6) after Brown-headed Nuthatches had finished breeding. In 2018, we inspected these 160 nest boxes for evidence of House Wrens breeding three times, once each in April, May, and June of 2018, respectively. McNair returned to Pinehurst from 28-30 October 2018 to re-examine nest box contents for any additional breeding evidence that may have occurred after mid-June. McNair could determine whether the nest was built by a female, and not by an unpaired male, by the presence of a distinct and lined nest cup, which is constructed solely by the female (Alworth and Schieber 2000, Johnson 2014, Kennedy and White 1992).

Results

In 2018, House Wrens were absent at the one golf course (Pinehurst No. 8) not embedded within a residential subdivision, but were present at three of the other four golf courses (Pinehurst No. 9, CCNC Cardinal and Dogwood courses). They used a total of six nest boxes (four at Pinehurst No. 9) from 17-30 April through 8-19 June and afterwards (based on the inspection in late October). Three nest boxes contained active nests: (1) 18 May, nest with six eggs; (2) another had a lined cup but was empty on 12 June, with 5 adult feathers in box, suggesting predation; and (3) another nest had been built after the nest box had been emptied of all contents on 12 June which contained one addled egg and a skeletonized carcass of an adult). The other three boxes contained incomplete House Wren nests, probably built by unpaired males. All nests were built on top of Brown-headed Nuthatch nests after the latter's young had fledged or on incomplete nuthatch nests after they ceased using the boxes for other reasons. Thus, in 2018, a total of 6% of available nest boxes (6/106) were used in some capacity by House Wrens at these three golf courses (or 4%, 6/160, at all five golf courses). In addition, an estimated total of five singing males were present on different territories away from the above nest boxes at these same three golf courses. Thus, an estimated total of eleven territorial male House Wrens were present at these three golf courses in Pinehurst during 2018.

Discussion

House Wrens have persisted to breed in their "core area" of Pinehurst, NC where a firm population estimate is now available for these five golf courses. This local

population has not collapsed, but we lack a population estimate for the entire Southern Pines-Pinehurst micropolitan area where the population may have declined because we did not monitor other urban habitats. The Sandhills of Moore County has had a unique concentration of resident naturalists, birdwatchers, and ornithologists in this section of south-central North Carolina for over a century (Brimley 1939; LeGrand 1975, 2018), including the current period which has more skilled observers than ever before. Consequently, this group could establish a community-based project to monitor scarce, local breeding populations of the House Wren (and other species such as the Blue-headed Vireo [*Vireo solitarius*]) every five years to document their persistence and determine the extent of their confirmed breeding distribution in the Sandhills of Moore County.

Acknowledgments

We thank S. Campbell for sharing information.

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2018 Spring Migration Counts in North Carolina

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Twenty-two count areas provided data for the 2018 Spring Count, two more than the previous year and back up to previous high levels. The Grandfather Mountain Count resumed after poor weather prevented its completion last year. Watauga County also joined with a very successful trial count. Total species (239) for the North Carolina Spring Count was slightly lower than average for the past few years, but identical to 2017. Total individual birds (82,629) was the lowest since 2010, although the number of participants (478) and total team-hours (1367.89) were above average. Birds per team hour (60.4) were well below average. In other words, it took more effort to find fewer birds than in previous years.

Some of the most uncommon species found (usually in just one count area, or in a few cases two areas, included: King Rail on the Chapel Hill count, Virginia Rail on the Mecklenburg count, White-rumped Sandpiper on the Henderson count, Mississippi Kite on the Southern Pines count, Olive-sided Flycatcher on the Hanging Rock count, Black-capped Chickadee on the Balsam Mountains count, Warbling Vireo on the Hanging Rock and Forsyth counts, Marsh Wren on the Brunswick count, Gray-cheeked Thrush on the Mecklenburg and Greensboro counts, Lark Sparrow on the Southern Pines count, Seaside Sparrow on the Brunswick count, Bay-breasted Warbler on the Forsyth count, Orange-crowned Warbler on the Greensboro count, Golden-winged Warbler on the Hanging Rock and Rockingham counts, Red Crossbill on the Balsam Mountains and Black Mountains counts, and Dickcissel on the Iredell count.

The most common and widespread species (overall total individuals exceeding 1000 and at least some found on every count) include, in order of abundance from highest to lowest: Northern Cardinal, American Crow, American Robin, Carolina Wren, Tufted Titmouse, Mourning Dove, Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Towhee, American Goldfinch, Carolina Chickadee, Chipping Sparrow, Blue Jay, Chimney Swift, and Indigo Bunting. Most abundant birds in the mountains were American Robin, Eastern Towhee, American Crow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Red-eyed Vireo. Most abundant birds in the Piedmont were American Crow, Carolina Wren, Canada Goose, Tufted Titmouse, and American Robin. Most abundant birds on the coast were Royal Tern, Short-billed Dowitcher, Black Skimmer, Laughing Gull, and Dunlin.

Details of individual counts including names of compilers and participants as well as count highlights and a list of species found exclusively on each count follow.

Mountains

Transylvania County – Count date May 7th, 120 species, 5116 individuals, 28 participants, 89.10 party-hours. Elevation ranges from 2100 to 5600 ft.
Weather: Temperature lower 50's to lower 70's Fahrenheit and partly cloudy
Compiler: Michael Plauché (captainbluegill@gmail.com)
Participants: Marvin Barg, Michele Barg, Nancy Cowall, Bruce Cox, David Dolittle, Ray Dunkelberg, George Dunkelberg, Robert Emmott, Deane Freudenberg, Mary Freudenberg, Elizabeth Galloway, Kathleen George, Gary Harris, Kathy Harris, Richard Jackson, Mike Judd, Nora Murdock, Janie Owens, Michael Plauché, Frank Porter, Barbara Reynolds, Marcus Simpson, Bill Seibenheller, Norma Siebenheller, Martine Stolk, Charlie Threatte, Linda Threatte, and Marilyn Westphal.
Exclusives: none
Notes: It was a great day. We might have had better luck with a few non-breeding migrants (swallows, non-breeding warblers, shorebirds) if the count had been a little earlier, but we got the *Empidonax* flycatchers, which we might have missed had the count been earlier.
Michael Plauché

Pisgah Ridge, Great Balsam and Plott Balsam Mountains IBA – Count dates spanned from May 18-22 with teams selecting one of those days to do their section, 80 species, 2938 individuals, 23 participants in 11 parties, 66.82 party-hours. Elevation ranges for this count run from 3500 to 6100 feet.
Weather: Variable over the count period with a couple of good sunny and clear days, but as always some windy and rainy conditions.
Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)
Participants: Tim Carstens, Nancy Casey, Doug Johnston, Robert Emmott, Shannon Fair, Tom Flagg, Steve Frohock, Robert Johnson, Stacy Johnson, Gail Lankford, Charlie Lankford, Mark McNeil, Nora Murdock, Naomi Otterness, Michael Plauché, Catherine Reid, Russell Roe, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Lou Weber, Marilyn Westphal, Connie Wulcowicz and Stan Wulcowicz
Exclusives: Black-capped Chickadee
Notes: Total species and total individual bird number were average for the 12 years of this count although effort (team hours) was slightly lower than average. May was a very wet month in the mountains, and that may have delayed nesting activity for many species. Prairie Warbler made a first time appearance on this count. No other unusual species were found, but Peregrine Falcons were once again attempting to nest at Devil's Courthouse, and swallows and Pine Siskins reappeared after being absent the previous year on the count.

The top ten most common species found were mostly the typical ones, except that Golden-crowned Kinglet numbers declined greatly taking this species completely out of the top ten with Red-eyed Vireo taking its place. The top ten were once again led by Chestnut-sided Warbler (247), and Dark-eyed Junco (246) followed by Eastern Towhee (222), Blue-headed Vireo (173), Black-throated Green Warbler (170), American Robin (137), Canada Warbler (121), Veery (116), Red-eyed Vireo (115), and Black-throated Blue Warbler (107).

As always, all of the singing chickadees between Black Balsam and Richland Balsam were singing the Black-capped song, and this time were listed as Black-capped although it is possible they are hybrids. Yellow-rumped Warblers were once again present along Black Balsam Road and may again be attempting to nest there.

Thanks again to all the count participants, especially for working hard to try to fit in a dry day for the count. Wet days at these elevations usually mean heavy fog, so finding a drier day is important.
Marilyn Westphal

Henderson County – Count date period from May 16th to May 23rd (teams select which date to do their count), 114 species, 2560 individuals, 19 participants in eight areas, 36.30 party-hours.
Weather: Variable, heavy rain early in count period.
Compiler: Jim Neal (jlbjneal@gmail.com)
Participants**:** Vickie Burke, Bob Butler, Doug Carle, Muriel Carle, Barrie Cliff, Paulette Cliff, Liz Fitts, Wayne Forsythe, Mike Judd, Barbara Neal, Jim Neal, Carol Palmer, Cherie Pittillo, Michael Plauché, Mark Simpson, Aaron Steed, Martine Stolk, Linda Wallace, and Marilyn Westphal
Exclusives: White-rumped Sandpiper
Notes: The 2018 Spring Migration Count for Henderson County, NC was conducted over an 8-day period from May 16-23. Nineteen people counted in eight areas within the county and found 114 species and 2560 individual birds. The 114 species is above the midpoint with a low of 95 species in 2015 and a high of 120 species in 2006. The 2560 total birds are below the midpoint between a low of 1612 in 2014 and a high of 3904 in 2012.

There were only four species with 100 or more birds. The European Starling at 122 was first followed by Eastern Towhee at 114, Song Sparrow at 102 and Short-billed Dowitcher at 100.

It rained every day of the count, which affected the results both positively and negatively. The positive result was that the torrential rain on the first day caused more shorebirds to stop at Hooper Lane and produced five new species for the spring migration count: Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel, Forster's Tern, White-rumped Sandpiper and Red Knot. Red Knots were also a first for Henderson County.

The negative impact was that flooding prevented counting certain parts of some areas and two areas had record low counts of species and individual birds for the 21 years of records. In spite of the weather conditions, the overall results were about average and we got our normal 20 species of warblers. Other really good species found included Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Common Nighthawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo and Grasshopper Sparrow.

I want to thank all those who braved the weather conditions to help with the count for an excellent job.
Jim Neal

Buncombe County – Count dates ran May 11-14 with each group selecting a day to count their section, 108 species, 4578 individuals, 28 participants in nine parties, 65.45 party-hours.
Weather: No data
Compiler: Tom Tribble (tntribble@gmail.com)
Participants: Miles Buddy, Seth Buddy, Tom Bush, Nancy Casey, Robert Emmott, G Greenburg, K. Hillegas, Doug Johnston, K Kelly, Gail Lankford, Herman Lankford, D. Liberatori, Nora Murdock, Janie Owens, Liz Payne, Jim Poling, Kitti Reynolds, Russell Roe, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Liz Skiles, Tom Tribble, C. Walsh, Marilyn Westphal, Jay Wherley, and Steve Yurkovich
Exclusives: Cerulean Warbler
Notes: Some comparisons from the last few years include:
2014 – 120 species, 5421 individuals
2015 – 112 species, 4902 individuals
2016 – 109 species, 4913 individuals
2017 – 113 species, 4024 individuals
2018 – 108 species, 4578 individuals

No unusual species were found, although one Cape May Warbler was reported, which is the first time in recent years. Also there were no Bobolinks reported for the first time in five years.
Tom Tribble

Black Mountains IBA – Count period ran from May 25th-31sr with teams selecting one of those days to complete their section, 56 species, 1941 individuals, 18 participants in 11 parties with some teams covering a second section on a different day, 51.10 party-hours.
Weather: May was a very wet month, so finding a suitable day to do the count was a challenge. Elevation range for this count is 3000 to 6684 feet with most of the count area above 4000 feet. This count has been conducted since 2006 with 2008 missed because of road closures.
Compiler: Marilyn Westphal (mjwestph@ret.unca.edu)
Participants: Eric Andmundson, Robert Emmott, Jamie Harrelson, Doug Johnston, Don Kautz, Bob Knight, Charlie Lankford, Gail Lankford, Nora Murdock, Michael Plauché, Barbara Reynolds, Steve Semanchuk, Mark Simpson, Debbie Segal, Alan Shapiro, Liz Skiles, Tom Tribble, Marilyn Westphal
Exclusives: none
Notes: Weather is always an issue in spring in the Black Mountains as fog and wind are constant problems, and May 2018 was a particularly wet month, but every team managed to complete their section nevertheless. Although participation was good, fewer species and fewer individuals than average were found. Most notable misses were Turkey Vulture and Brown Thrasher, and no potentially-breeding Swainson's Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, or Least Flycatchers were found as they have been in previous years. The small population of Swainson's Thrushes that were located in this area for almost a decade has been absent the last couple of years. The population may not have been large enough to sustain itself. Least Flycatchers always occur only irregularly in the area. Also unusual was the lack of any raptors other than Broad-winged Hawk. No nocturnal birding occurred, so no owls were found.

Much of the area covered in this count is high elevation spruce/fir habitat and the most frequently found species are those common to that habitat. This year, as usual, the top ten species were largely dominated by spruce/fir specialists and included Dark-eyed Junco (244), Black-throated Green Warbler (190), Golden-crowned Kinglet (152), Blue-headed Vireo (135), Blackburnian Warbler (94), Eastern Towhee (94), Red-breasted Nuthatch (81), Black-throated Blue Warbler (80), Canada Warbler (75), and Veery (73). Red Crossbills and Pine Siskins, species with widely varying populations from one year to the next, were both present only in very low numbers in 2018.

Many thanks once again to all the participants. This count requires some significant hiking over sometimes steep and/or rocky trails, so their efforts are always greatly appreciated.

Marilyn Westphal

Grandfather Mountain – Count date May 25th, 75 species, 1085 individuals, nine participants in five parties, 24.00 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Amy Renfranz (amy@grandfather.com)

Participants: Robin Diaz, Debi Campbell, Gina Diggs, Steve Dowland, Kendell Juell, Guy McGrane, Amy Renfranz, Judi Sawyer, and Chrissy Verdream

Exclusives: none

Notes: none

Watauga County – Count date May 5th, 115 species, 1741 individuals, 18 participants, 45.00 party-hours.

Weather: No data

Compiler: Guy McGrane (badgerboy@wilkes.net)

Participants: Alicia Baur, Meredith Boothe, Anita Clemmer, Martha Cutler, Steve Dowlan, Bill Dunson, Margaret Dunson, Elizabeth Faison, Pat Geiger, Merrill Lynch, Guy McGrane, Janet Paulette, Richard Paulette, Will Pratt, Pat Rusch, Beverly Saltonstall, Debbie Shetterly and Jimmie Shetterly

Exclusives: none

Notes: High Country Audubon Society completed this trial run for a Spring Count covering the whole of Watauga County this year. With 19 participants doing 45 party hours of birding, including a couple hours owling, 1741 birds and 115 species were found, 120 including four count week birds and a probably uncountable Mute Swan.

Good finds were a Sora at Brookshire Park, a Northern Saw-whet Owl above Sims pond at Price Park, a late Red-breasted Merganser at Price Lake, and a late White-crowned Sparrow at Brookshire Park.

Birds missed that we can usually find in the right habitat this time of year were Hermit Thrush, Vesper Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Rock Pigeon, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Count week birds missed on count day were White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. If interest remains we will continue this count in future years.

Guy McGrane

Hanging Rock State Park IBA – Count date May 9th, 93 species 832 individuals, nine participants in five parties, 17.00 party-hours. Elevation range 1200-2400 feet.
Weather: no data
Compiler: Jean Chamberlain (jchamberlain1@windstream.net)
Participants: Jesse Anderson, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhardt, Don Kautz, Virginia Perry, Jeremy Reiskind, David Shumate, Cara Woods and Tony Woods
Exclusives: Bufflehead, Olive-sided Flycatcher
Notes: none

Piedmont

Iredell County – Count date May 6th, 109 species, 2657 individuals, 12 participants in four parties and one feeder watcher, 25.50 party-hours. Weather: Sunny, temperature ranged from 59-73°F
Count circle is centered on the South Yadkin River Bridge on Chipley Ford Road in northern Iredell County.
Compiler: Ron Underwood (rongto@gmail.com)
Participants: Debbie Birnley, Evie Caldwell, Cynthia Dickerson, Bill English, Jack Greene, Larry Marlin, Caroline Martin, Cheri Seli, Jason Thiele, Garnet Underwood, Ron Underwood and Mark Whitaker.
Exclusives: American Black Duck, Dickcissel
Notes: none

Mecklenberg County – Count date May 5th, 125 species, 6896 individuals, 34 participants, 105.20 party-hours.
Weather: no data
Compiler: Jeff Lemons (birdsalot@gmail.com)
Participants: Jill Baim, Ron Clark, Wayne Covington, Jennifer Daggy, Bill Duston, Jan Fowler, Jim Guyton, Chris Hanna, John Hanna, Greg Hays, Christy Hill, Matt Janson, Dennis Kent, Malia Kline, Ken Kneidel, Dennis Lankford, Jeff Lemons, Joclyn MacLaughlin, Pat MacLaughlin, Kevin Metcalf, Roger Moyer, Martina Nordstrand, Jill Palmer,Taylor Piephoff, Lucy Quintilliano, Barry Rowan, Tammy Sanders, Tom Sanders, John Scavetto, David Schroder, Don Seriff, Steve Tracy, Rob VanEpps, and Judy Walker
Exclusives: Virginia Rail
Notes: none

Pilot Mountain State Park – Count date May 2nd, 107 species, 1265 individuals, nine participants, 26.00 party-hours. Surry County - Pilot Mountain is the count center.
Weather: Temperature 48-83°F, light winds, clear in the morning, increasing clouds in the afternoon
Compiler: Jesse Anderson (jesse.anderson@ncparks.gov)
Participants: Jesse Anderson, Brian Bockhahn, Jean Chamberlain, Kerry Eckhart, Nathan Gatto, Daniel Jackson, Don Kautz, Don Lendle and James Williams

Exclusives: none
Notes: none

Forsyth County – Count date May 5th, 127 species, 4750 individuals, 40 participants in 12 teams, 110.50 party-hours.
Weather: Temperature 62-77°F
Compiler: Nathan Gatto (ndgatto72@gmail.com)
Participants: Ga Baliga, Mary Franklin Blackburn, Malcolm Brown, Tommy Castleman, Harvey Clodfelter, David Collins, Mike Conway, Carol Cunningham, David Disher, Susan Disher, Cynthia Donaldson, Kerry Eckhardt, Greg Gatto, Kate Gatto, Nathan Gatto, Sarah Gatto, Bill Gifford, Lucy Gifford, John Haire, Roper Halverson, Elaine Hammond, John Hammond, Wendy Hawkins, Royce Hough, Jim Martin, Craig McCleary, Jane McCleary, Heather Moir, Ron Virginia Perry, Jeremy Reiskind, Rob Rogers, Lee Salisbury, Bill Spencer, Philip Stewart, Chuck Thompson, Cindy Thompson, Katherine Thorington, Gray Tuttle, Kay Tuttle, and Jay Wilhelmi
Exclusives: Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, Bay-breasted Warbler
Notes: We had a great Spring Bird Count last month! Our teams were able to locate 127 species, which is slightly better than the count average of 124 species. As a whole, I felt that this was a fairly slow spring and this count helped confirm my suspicions. We only recorded 4750 individuals, down from the average of 5444. It could just take one flock of European Starlings or Red-winged Blackbirds to completely change the average!

It's fascinating to think about the best birds of the count, and this year we had a lot of contenders. Ring-necked Duck, Semipalmated Plover, Bay-breasted Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, and multiple Bobolink were some of the best birds of the count. We did miss a few birds that were picked up during the count week: Willow Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wilson's Snipe, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Common Nighthawk, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. Overall we had a great count. I hope that next year we add a few new faces to the count teams.
Nathan Gatto

Rockingham County – Count date May 1st, 118 species, 2385 individuals, seven participants in three parties, 43.50 party-hours.
Weather: Mostly clear skies and moderate winds, temperature 57-76°F
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Penny Barham, Brian Bockhahn, Becky Loyocano, M Miller, D Pennebaker, M Wall and Matt Wangerin
Exclusives: Barn Owl
Notes: The SIXTH Rockingham County Spring Bird Count was an overall record breaker! The count was held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018 under clear skies and wide ranging temperatures from 39-82°. Seven observers in five parties tallied a record 118 species (average 109 and previous high 116) and 2385 birds (average 1757 and previous high 2255). Totals were led by 128 Northern Cardinals and 111 Red-eyed Vireos. Two additional birds were seen during count week: Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Blackpoll Warbler.

First count records were many: a Barn Owl was heard well and recorded in the northern territory; maybe our park neighbors were right with their reports a few years

back! Horned Lark was a little more expected along Mayo River Road, as was our long awaited first Chestnut-sided Warbler, such foothills habitat; I thought they'd be more regular! Amazing was a photographed Golden-winged Warbler, only the second record for the park with just one early bio blitz sighting. A flock of ten Bobolink was seen in the Dan River/Airport region and a lone male Baltimore Oriole flew over the Mayo River near the beach.

Other goodies include second records of Red-headed Woodpecker, three parties with Lesser Yellowlegs, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-winged and Tennessee Warbler for our 24 warbler count total!

Misses included Wood Duck (second miss), Coopers Hawk (first miss), Great Horned Owl (second miss) and Palm Warbler (third miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Greensboro – Count date April 28th, 126 species, 7276 individuals, 39 participants, 108.50 party-hours.

Weather: Pleasant day, temperature 48-76°F, skies sunny to partly cloudy, wind light at 10-20mph from the southwest. In a spring notable for its wet weather, there was no precipitation.

Compiler: Elizabeth Link (elzlink@yahoo.com)

Participants: Carolyn Allen, Bruce Billings, Bill Bowman, Diana Bowman, Dennis Burnette, Lynn Burnette, Sue Cole, Scott DePue, Jim Eldrett, Lynne Gray, Amy Hanson, Mike Howard, Carolyn Hunt, Todd Kilb, Elizabeth Link, Henry Link, Clarence Mattocks, Linda Melendez, Lyn McCoy, Lauren McLaughlin, Jean Murdick, Roberta Newton, Lane Oldham, Sandy Redden, Stuart Redden, Danny Royster, Wallace Sills, Lou Skrabec, Jim Strickland, Tripto Suwal, Emily Talbert, Andrew Thornton, Emily Tyler, Ann VanSant, Marty Wall, Matt Wangarin, Stella Wear, Tom Wear, and Melissa Whitmire

Exclusives: Orange-crowned Warbler

Notes: The 2018 count was good in many respects, compared to the counts of the last 20 years. Thirty-nine birders took part in the count, well over our average of 30. They put in 108.5 hours counting, above our average of 95.75 hours, and we also had 1.5 hours of owling.

Our total of 126 species of birds was right at our average of 125, and we had six count week species. The number of individual birds counted was slightly below average: 7276 individuals were counted this year, and our average is 7307.

I have been using only the last 20 years of count data to determine averages, as I feel that it is more representative of current development and environmental conditions in the count circle. However, sometimes it is interesting to look at the over 50 years of count data that we have available for our count.

For instance, one of the highlights of our count was the first Orange-crowned Warbler since 1967, found by Melissa Whitmire. We also had two Blue-winged Warblers, a number matched in eight of the last 51 years and exceeded only twice. We also had 22 other warbler species, a nice tally when, for many years, our warbler species didn't hit 20. We had 22 Black-and-white Warblers, 59 Northern Parula, and six Worm-eating Warblers, all well above our average, and each are numbers that have been

exceeded in only one other year since 1967.

Lingering winter waterfowl of interest included a single Common Loon, and a Red-breasted Merganser. A Greater Scaup that showed up on count week was only the second time that we've had one in the count period – the first time was on count day last year.

While numbers of several warblers were well below our 20-year average, such as the Yellow Warbler (none on count day), Yellow-breasted Chat, and American Redstart, the numbers do not seem to represent a trend over that time.

Elizabeth Link

Southern Pines – Count date May 6th, 114 species, 3046 individuals, 22 participants in nine teams, 87.20 party-hours.

Weather: Temperature 64-87°F, wind calm – 10mph from W-WSW, mostly to partly cloudy, no rain

Compiler: Susan Campbell (susan@ncaves.com)

Participants: Rex Badgett, Doreen Blanchette, Carol Bowman, Jay Carter, Bob Ganis, Tina Ganis, Mike Greene, Tom Howard, Alicia Jackson, Charlie Jones, Linda Jones, Marjorie Ludwig, Jeff Marcus, David McCloy, Carolyn McDermott, Jon Rouse, Bruce Sorrie, Rick Studenmund, Michelle Wilcox, Nancy Williamson, Darryl Young and Shelley Young.

Exclusives: Pectoral Sandpiper, Mississippi Kite, Lark Sparrow

Notes: This year's count was definitely affected by having fewer participants as both species count and abundance were down. The weather forecast was for rain, but that did not transpire, so field conditions were pretty good.

Although only 114 species were encountered, there were some interesting sightings. Birds of note included Anhinga, Pectoral Sandpipers, Semipalmated Plover, as well as yellowlegs. Shorebird presence was surely a result of the lakebed habitat at Woodlake. Also, we had a nice pair of Mississippi Kites that were establishing a breeding territory adjacent to Woodlake at the time of the count.

Susan Campbell

Chapel Hill – Count date May 13th, 111 species, 6508 individuals, 37 field observers and one feeder watcher, 96.55 party hours.

Weather: Sunny and hot, temperature 67- 93°F, wind variable at 3-9mph, dry

Compiler: Will Cook (cwcook@duke.edu)

Participants: David Anderson, Vern Bothwell, Gail Boyarsky, Norm Budnitz, John Cantrell, Jim Capel, Will Cook, Maria de Bruyn, Kenny Dinnon, Joe Donahue, Tom Driscoll, Kent Fiala, Judith Foushee, Jill Froning, Bob Gardiner, Steve Graves, Clare Gyorke, Gene Kingsley, David Murdock, Don Pelly, Jelmer Poelstra, Judy Murray, Elaine Norwood, Joe Norwood, Margaret Scott, Roger Shaw, David Smith, Judy Smith, Steve Stevens, Paul Taille, Shelley Theye, Ginger Travis, Margaret Wainwright, Sue Wolff, and Bruce Young

Exclusives: King Rail

Notes: The 2018 Chapel Hill spring count on Sunday, May 13, 2018, was on the same date as last year's count, but what a difference! Last year's count was spectacular, one of

the best ever with 130 species, while this year's 111 species was our lowest in four decades. The weather made a huge difference. Last year's count had perfect weather: calm, cool, cloudy. This year's was sunny and hot, with the high of 93°F tying the record high for this date, more like a mid-July day than a mid-spring day; the birding was also reminiscent of mid-July. The extreme heat made both the birds and the birders lethargic, so many teams put in less time than usual.

This year's species total of 111 is 11 below the 10-year average of 122. This is the lowest since 1974, before the filling of Jordan Lake, when we had 109 species. The total number of birds, 6508, is well below the average of 8289. Effort on the count was also quite low, with 96.55 party hours (average 121.80). However the number of birds per party hour, 67.40, is surprisingly close to the average of 65.70. Perhaps the low count wasn't because the birds were lying low from the heat after all, but more instead the birders!

The star of this year's count was a Peregrine Falcon at Maple View Farm, seen flying north over Dairyland Road by Roger Shaw. This is only the second for the count; the first was way back in 1965. Roger also had a Grasshopper Sparrow there -- normally not notable, but they are getting more difficult to find in recent years. Other goodies included Hooded Mergansers still breeding at Sandy Creek Park in Durham (Kent Fiala), a Great Egret at Jordan Lake (Bruce Young), and a King Rail at University Lake (heard by Ginger Travis from her kayak).

We set one record high this year, unexpected considering the low number of party hours: Acadian Flycatcher (107 beats the old record of 88 set in 2006, average 64). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were also found in unusually high numbers (40 is the highest since 2000, average 15).

The big miss this year was White-throated Sparrow, the first miss of this lingering winter bird in the more than 60 year history of the Chapel Hill count. We did have it in count week, though. Many other species were remarkably scarce this year: Canada Goose (82 is lowest since 1990, average 199), Wood Duck (15 is lowest since 1990, average 35), Red-tailed Hawk (12, average 22), Rock Pigeon (7, average 21), Eastern Kingbird (12 is lowest since 1973, average 23), Purple Martin (10 is lowest since 1974, average 52), Tree Swallow (3 is lowest since 1998, average 23), American Robin (130 is lowest since 1975, average 245), Ovenbird (78, average 107), Prothonotary Warbler (14, average 35), Common Yellowthroat (50 is lowest since 1969, average 107), Common Grackle (96 is lowest since 1969, average 187), and Orchard Oriole (7 is lowest since 1995, average 18). Total number of warblers (505, average 792) is the lowest since 1996.

Team honors: Will Cook's team, covering Mason Farm as well as the SW Durham sewage plant, recorded 77 species, edging past the team of Shelley Theye and Jill Froning with 75. Tom Driscoll got the highest individual count with 765.

Charles W. "Will" Cook

Jordan Lake – Count date May 5th, 112 species, 6982 individuals, 50 participants in 21 parties, 105.81party-hours. Weather: Mild with temperatures ranging from 63°F in the morning to 76°F in the afternoon. Winds calm and skies overcast in the morning to partly cloudy in the afternoon.

Compiler: Norm Budnitz (nbudnitz@gmail.com)

Participants: Patsy Bailey, Barbara Beaman, Eliabeth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Brian Bockhahn, Hillary Broder, Steve Buczynski, Norm Budnitz, Sebastian Burgess, Chris Canfield, Jim Capel, Cal Chelette, Carol Chelette, Barbara Coffman, Patrick Coin, Tom Driscoll, Russell Herman, Loren Hintz, Karen Hogan, Bo Howes, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Theresa Korab, Laura Lipps, Susan Lyons, Kerry MacPherson, Trish MacPherson, Jennifer Maher, Beth Mancuso, Marty McClelland, Steve McMurray, Kyle Mills, Robin Moran, Mark Owens, Rick Payne, Don Pelly, Doug Pratt, Susan Pratt, Tommy Richey, Roger Shaw, Josh Southern, Sterling Southern, Jenny Stanley, Chris Tomazic, Ginger Travis, Andy Upshaw, Margaret Vimmerstedt, Fleeta Wilkinson, Emma Wright and Joe Zellers.
Exclusives: Ruddy Duck
Notes: Fifty observers in 21 parties participated (our 10-year averages are 45 and 21, respectively). We tallied 6982 individual birds (average 8008) and 112 species (average 120) in 106 party hours (average 124).

Although we recorded all the usual suspects with no notable missed species, we found very few waterfowl (ducks) and very few passage migrants—neotropical migrants that pass through our area but don't stop to breed here. For example, we had the usual cast of our breeding warblers—Ovenbird, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, etc.—but no Blackpolls, Bay-breasted, or Cape May Warblers. It's hard to say if there is any significance to that conservation-wise, or whether it was just a matter of timing—that we simply counted on a day when those birds were not on the move through our area. I prefer to think it was the latter; I worry that it might have been the former.

We did have a couple of new record high counts. We reported 86 White-eyed Vireos (our previous high was 83 in 1979) and 202 Summer Tanagers (189 in 2003). And we almost tied an old record with 79 Eastern Wood-Pewees (80 in 2015).

Brian Bockhahn found a couple of notable species from Vista Point: One Ruddy Duck and two Herring Gulls.

Again this year there was plenty of competition in the area with two bicycle events and a motorcycle rally. The first Sunday in May is a popular time to get out into open spaces.

Sebastian Burgess, Tom Driscoll, Elizabeth Keating, Don Pelly, and Susan Pratt, working Hank's Chapel and Gum Springs Roads, reported 81 species of birds, while Patsy Bailey and Gene Kingsley found 77 species in the area on the east side of the Jordan Lake Dam.
Norm Budnitz

Durham – Count date April 29th, 111 species, 2585 individuals, 12 participants in 7 parties, 39.00 party-hours. Weather: Clear skies, light winds, temperature 49°-62°F.
Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)
Participants: Brian Bockhahn, Steve Buczynski, Norm Budnitz, Bryce Fleming, Elizabeth Keating, Gene Kingsley, Thomas Krakauer, Roger Shaw, Bill Webster, Bruce Young and two others.
Exclusives: none
Notes: Twelve observers in seven parties tallied 111 species (average 111) and 2585 total

birds (average 4006) led by 152 Yellow-rumped Warbler, 139 Northern Cardinal and 129 Double-crested Cormorant.

Highlights include single Pied-billed Grebe at Brickhouse Road; three adult plumage Bonaparte's Gull at Hickory Hill; a Hermit Thrush seen well on the Mountains to Sea Trail; two parties with Chestnut-sided Warbler and two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

Misses include Northern Bobwhite, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Blue-headed Vireo and Cedar Waxwing!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Falls Lake – Count date April 25th, 113 species, 3132 individuals, 10 participants in 7 parties, 32.35 party-hours Weather: Cloudy with mild temperature 60-64°F

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Herb Amyx, Pat Amyx, Brian Bockhahn, Beth Bishop, Todd Bishop, Norm Budnitz, Amy Corbally, A Sancartier, Josh Southern and Patty Tice.

Exclusives: none

Notes: The fifteenth Falls Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 25, 2018 with cloudy skies and mild temperatures ranging from 60-64°. Ten observers in 7 parties tallied 113 species (average 113) and 3132 total birds (average 3902).

Most numerous birds were again Cliff Swallow at 316, followed distantly by 177 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 131 Northern Cardinals. First records included: not a surprise with the recent spring sightings, there was a single Lesser Black-backed Gull off Sandling Beach.

Other goodies included our second Blackpoll Warbler at Beaverdam Lake north end; which also had a male and female Hooded Merganser as our third record; our second record Greater Black-backed Gull showed up at Sandling Beach with the other five species of gulls and one tern species.

Misses included Solitary Sandpiper for the fifth time; Eastern Screech Owl (sixth miss); Great Horned Owl (fourth miss); Whip-poor-will (second miss) and Chuck-wills-widow (third miss); Song Sparrow (second miss).

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!

Brian Bockhahn

Kerr Lake – Count date April 24th, 108 species, 2938 individuals, 16 participants in eight parties, 44.60 party-hours.

Weather: Cloudy, rain in the morning, temperatures (58°-61°F)

Compiler: Brian Bockhahn (birdranger248@gmail.com)

Participants: Jeff Blalock, Brian Bockhahn, Ann Brice, Adam D'Onofrio, Jackie Evrard, Mark Evrard, Bryce Fleming, Paul Glass, Bill Lindemuth, Joyce Lindemuth, Fred Lobdell, Carol Mauzey, J Mills, Clyde Smith, David Spears and Evan Spears

Exclusives: Blue-winged Teal, Redhead, Wilson's Snipe

Notes: The fifteenth Kerr Lake Spring Bird Count was held on April 24, 2018 under very cloudy skies with rain all morning and mild temperatures. Despite the rain a record 16 observers in eight parties tallied 108 species (average 118) and 2938 birds (average 3882) led by perennial leaders 227 Black Vultures, 185 Yellow-rumped Warblers and 179 Double-crested Cormorants.

New to the spring checklist were a single male Redhead loafing around below the dam, stretched its wings a few times seemingly uninjured but running late! Other goodies included a third record of Laughing Gull reported by three parties at Satterwhite, Bullocksville and Palmer Point, likely a shared sighting; third record of Chestnut-sided Warbler at Bullocksville; third record of Dark-eyed Juncos at County Line; fourth record Blue-winged Teal and Wilson's Snipe at Dick Cross.

Misses included Sharp-shinned Hawk (fourth miss); Yellow-billed Cuckoo (fourth miss); Great Horned Owl (third miss); Whip-poor-will (second miss); White-breasted Nuthatch (first miss); Yellow Warbler (first miss). Not all birds are waterproof!

Many thanks to everyone who volunteered to count!
Brian Bockhahn

Raven Rock State Park – Count date April 28th, 111 species, 4,078 individuals, 20 participants in 12 teams, 80.91 party-hours.
Weather: Temperature - 48-80°F; wind SW at 0-7mph; water open, AM sunny, PM partly cloudy. Count circle center at junction of NC210 and SR 1434
Compiler: Erik R. Thomas (erthomas@ncsu.edu)
Participants: John Bartlett, Steve Buscynski, Charles Byrd, Lisa Cook, David DuMond, Michael Fisk, Molly Fullwood, Paul Hart, Tom Howard, Prudence Mainor, Tim McGreal, Jeff Mielke, Henry Rease, Kevin Rease, Mitch Rease, Mary Stevens, Sarah Stevens, Erik Thomas, April Wagner and Amber Williams
Exclusives: none
Notes: Our total of 111 species equaled last years' count. Our biggest misses were Belted Kingfisher and Anhinga. Among the highlights were a Blue-headed Vireo by Paul Hart, Sarah Stevens, and Lisa Cook; two Swainson's Warblers by Mitch, Kevin, and Henry Reese; and two Yellow Warblers by John Bartlett. We also had good counts of owls and nightjars.
Erik R. Thomas

Coast

Brunswick County – Count date April 21st, 156 species, 6619 individuals, 19 field observers and 1 feeder watcher, 66.50 party-hours. Weather: Partly cloudy, wind NE to E at 5-10mph, temperature 40-67°F.
Compiler: Dave Weesner (david.weesner@yahoo.com) and Sam Cooper (dmcooper2@juno.net)
Participants: Jamie Adams, Lynn Eria Beegle, Kathleen Bowman, Sam Cooper, George Harrington, Joy Hosier, Doug Hughes, Amanda Kiel, Sherry Lane, Maxine McCullar, Mary Lynn Meister, Ann Orsillo, Stacey Sayeth, Harry Sell, Deborah Shaw, Hugh Shaw, Jeri Smart, Bruce Smithson, Dave Weesner, Carson Wood.
Exclusives: Gadwall, American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup, Black Scoter, Clapper Rail, Common Gallinule, American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover, Piping Plover, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Willet, Least Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Common Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Black Skimmer, Wood Stork, Northern Gannet, Brown Pelican, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Cattle Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron,

White Ibis, Glossy Ibis, Marsh Wren, Seaside Sparrow, Boat-tailed Grackle, Painted Bunting

Notes: The 2018 spring count was conducted on 21 April and yielded 156 species, 6620 individuals from the effort of 20 participants. Twenty observers in 8 groups concentrated on some of the birding hotspots, including the beaches of Sunset, Ocean Isle, Oak Island, Bald Head, the southern portion of Fort Fisher, the Green Swamp, Southport area, Orton Pond, Brunswick Nature Park, EV Henwood, and Indian Creek by boat (the only area covered by boat). Eagle Island and areas associated with the old Orton Plantation property were not surveyed due to access restrictions. This year's effort, coverage, and species count was similar to last year, and was the second spring count conducted since the 1990s.

Dave Weesner and Sam Cooper

Appendix

To view the Appendix detailing species identified on each count, click in the box below:

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

Josh Southern
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Holly Springs, NC 27540
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(All dates Winter 2019, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **CBC** – Christmas Bird Count, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **Mt** – Mount, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

**All italicized place names are counties.*

Ross's Goose: Multiple birds were seen amongst the large flocks of Snow Geese in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC throughout the winter, with counts of nine+ on 3 Dec (Derb Carter) and 16 on 10 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra). Individuals were reported at about a half-dozen other sites during the period as well.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Though no large flocks were reported this winter, sightings of individuals and pairs were made at scattered sites throughout the period.

Cackling Goose: Several continued from late fall in the fields around the Beasley Rd exit on US-64 in *Washington* NC throughout the period (m. obs.) with counts of four on 8 Dec (Ed Corey, et al.) and seven on 11 Dec (Lucas Bobay, Sam Jolly). A small irruption occurred in the northwestern NC Piedmont in mid-February, with sightings including three at a pond along Howerton Rd in *Guilford* 4-26 Feb (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.), two in Wilkesboro *Wilkes* 15 Feb into spring (Dale Reynolds, m. obs.), and one at Farris Memorial Park *Rockingham* 16 Feb through 5 Mar (Marty Wall).

Trumpeter Swan: Sightings of this largest swan have increased in recent years. This winter sightings involved one or two at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 8 Dec (Jeff Lewis), one in the Lake Landing area of Mattamuskeet NWR 5 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra), one in a field along NC-42 just southeast of Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 4 Feb through 3 Mar (Derb Carter, m. obs.), and one or two in the Northeast Creek arm of Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 26 Feb (Louise Belk). The last sighting is pending review by the NC BRC due to its inland locality.

Tundra Swan: A Eurasian race Tundra Swan [Bewick's Swan] was seen and photographed amongst a large flock of Tundra Swans in an agricultural field along NC-42 just southeast of Conetoe *Edgecombe* NC 2-8 Feb (Ricky Davis, m. obs.).

Tundra Swans, 6 Feb 2019, Edgecombe Co, NC. Photo by Michael Cheves

Cinnamon Teal: A drake seen and photographed by many along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17-22 Jan (Lester Coble, m. obs.) provided the first definitive report of this duck in NC in 18 years!

Eurasian Wigeon: Sightings included up to two continuing at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC from fall through 6 Feb (m. obs.), one at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 8 Dec (Jeff Lewis) and 31 Jan (m. obs.), one at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 6 Jan (Derb Carter, m. obs.), and two amongst American Wigeons in a flooded agricultural field near Gull Rock Game Land *Hyde* NC 10 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra).

Green-winged Teal: A Eurasian race Green-winged Teal [Common Teal] was seen by many along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 17 Jan (Lee Adams, et al.) through 8 Feb (Andrew Thornton).

Canvasback: There was a widely reported irruption into the western half of the Carolinas beginning in late January, almost certainly related to a period of below-freezing temperatures to the north. New record high counts were made in multiple counties including 24 on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 30 Jan (Michael Plauché, et al.), 11 at the Woodland Lagoon WTP in *Lexington* SC 30 Jan (John Ebert), eight on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 31 Jan (Bob Butler), eight along Woodfield Way in *Wilkes* NC 9 Feb (Dale Reynolds), 23 on a pond along Stamey Valley Rd in *Greenville* SC 12-13 Feb (Gary Harbour, m. obs.), 15 on a pond along Buffalo Church Rd in *Cleveland* NC 14 Feb (Bill Hooker), 15 on a pond along Farmstead Way in *Iredell* NC 18 Feb (Jeff Martin), 19 on Osceola Lake *Henderson* NC 20 Feb (Kevin Burke), and eight at Cherry Farm in *Pickens* SC 8 Mar (Austin Pickhardt).

Redhead: 15000 on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 8 Dec (Susan Campbell, et al.) and 2000 on the Newport River estuary north of Morehead City *Carteret* NC 26 Jan (Jeannie Kraus) were notable concentrations. Like Canvasbacks, Redheads numbers increased in the western half of the Carolinas in the late winter, with 318 on Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 1 Mar (Frank Porter) providing an incredible total for the mountain region.

Ring-necked Duck: 8000 at ACE Basin NWR *Charleston* SC during its CBC 30 Dec (Christopher Davies, Pam Ford, Craig Watson) was an amazing count, the highest on any Audubon CBC this year.

Tufted Duck: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report of an apparent Tufted Duck seen and photographed on Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 8 Feb (Scott Davis, David McLean, Linda Montgomery). This individual is almost certainly the same individual reported in that area Feb-Mar 2018.

King Eider, 7 Jan 2019, Dare Co, NC. Photo by Marty Wall

King Eider: A hen was briefly seen around the jetty on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC where photographed 7 Jan (Marty Wall).

Common Eider: This species was well-reported this winter, with sightings made along much of the Carolina coast from Carova Beach *Currituck* NC, where a sick/injured hen was photographed 17 Dec (Marissa Bijarro), south to Hunting Island SP *Beaufort* SC where a first-winter drake was seen 19 Jan to 18 Feb (Steven Guy, m. obs.). Three, two hens and a first-year drake, were seen at Johnnie Mercer's Pier and later Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC 7-9 Dec (Sam Cooper, David Weesner). Two hens were seen and photographed by many in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 23 Dec through 9 Feb (Sidney Gauthreaux, m. obs.). Five in *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) was a good tally. Three first-year drakes around

the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 6 Jan through 3 Feb (John Fussell, et al.) were likely the same three eiders seen there 29 Nov (Alain Robert). Three, two hens and a first-year drake, were photographed in flight together off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 16 Jan (David Wilson).

Harlequin Duck: A drake seen and photographed by many around the pilings under the south end of the Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 12 Jan (Michael Gosselin, Jeff Lewis) through 17 Feb (m. obs.) was the only one reported this winter.

White-winged Scoter: A sub-adult photographed at River Park North *Pitt* NC 4 Feb (Trevor Sleight) was a first for that county.

Black Scoter: A drake on Lochmere Lake *Wake* NC during the Raleigh CBC 15 Dec (Josh Southern, Sterling Southern) was unusual for a site in the Piedmont.

Long-tailed Duck: An adult hen photographed on Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 1 Feb (Eddie Owens) and an adult drake on Lower Springdale Estates Lake *Wake* NC 6-18 Feb (Karaleah Reichart, m. obs.) were good finds for the Piedmont, probably displaced to those sites by below-freezing temperatures north of the Carolinas.

Common Goldeneye: Sightings increased in late winter during of period of below-freezing temperatures north of the Carolinas. A few of the higher counts were 25 at Riverbend Park *Catawba* NC 4-7 Feb (Dwayne Martin), seven on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 8 Feb (Roger Smith, m. obs.) and 23 Feb (Wendy Allen), and ten on a pond along Woodfield Way in *Wilkes* NC 23 Feb (Martin)

Common Merganser: Individual hens wintering on Forest Lake *Florence* SC 6 Dec through 23 Mar (Shawn Smolen-Morton) and at James Island County Park *Charleston* SC 15 Dec through 2 Mar (Carl Miller, m. obs.) were unusual for sites in SC. Eight on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 26 Jan (Joe & Liz Dunkleman) was a notable count for SC. Multiple sightings were made in northwestern NC in late winter including two drakes on Powder Horn Mountain *Watauga* 5 Feb (Janet Paulette, m. obs.) and 12 on Belews Lake *Stokes* 16 Feb (Tony & Cara Woods).

Red-necked Grebe: Individuals were seen at multiple sites in *Dare* NC—just off the beach in Nags Head 23 Dec (Eric Kershner), on the Salt Pond at Cape Point 28 Dec through 19 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), at Oregon Inlet 19 Jan (m. obs.), off Coquina Beach 19 Jan (Derb Carter), off Jennette's Pier 19-29 Jan (Martina Nordstrand, m. obs.), and off the beach at Pea Island NWR 14 Feb (Allen Bryan).

Eared Grebe: One was photographed at the Jacksonville WTP *Onslow* NC 6 Feb (Brad Dolak).

Western Grebe: Individuals were photographed on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 13 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) and off Bulls Island at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 7 Feb (David McLean, et al.).

White-winged Dove: Individuals, possibly the same individual, visited feeders on opposite sides of Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 4 Dec (Bruce Smithson) and 14-20 Jan (Elizabeth Gordon).

Chuck-will's-widow: One heard calling in the I'on Swamp *Charleston* SC during the Charleston CBC 5 Jan (Ed Blitch, et al.) was a great find for winter.

Rufous Hummingbird: Sightings included a first-winter male visiting Elaeagnus flowers and later a feeder in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 11 Dec (John Fussell) through 26 Jan (Steve Howell), possibly the same individual at another feeder in Morehead City 30 Jan through 3 Feb (Carol Reigle), a second-year female visiting a feeder in Asheville *Buncombe* NC 23 Dec through 29 Mar (*fide* Simon Thompson), an adult female in Buxton *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (Lena Gallitano, Audrey Whitlock) banded 31 Jan (Susan Campbell) and continuing through 17 Feb (Ann Maddock), and an adult female visiting a feeder in Apex *Wake* NC for the fifth consecutive winter 1 Jan through 25 Feb (Susan Davis, m. obs.).

Selasphorus sp.: Birds not identified to species but probably Rufous Hummingbirds visited feeders in Davidson *Mecklenburg* NC in early December (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), in *Charleston* SC 8-31 Dec (Russell and Lacy Johnson), in Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC 21 Jan (Dennis Kent, et al.), and in Mars Hill *Madison* NC 16 Feb (Jay Wherley).

Virginia Rail: One seen at The Park at Flat Rock *Henderson* NC 6-28 Jan (Catherine Ford, m. obs.) was unusual for the mountain region in winter.

Common Gallinule: Seven+ photographed at Forest Hill Park in Emerald Isle *Carteret* NC 17 Feb (John te Raa) was a good count for that area in winter.

Sandhill Crane: The peak count of the wintering flock in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC was 93 cranes on 4 Feb (Scott Davis, Linda Montgomery). 34 in flight over west Asheville *Buncombe* NC 26 Feb (Bryant Anderson) was a notable count for the mountain region. Three were seen in the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC through much of the winter, 22 Dec through 22 Feb (m. obs.). Five hung around for several days at the Super Sod farm along Hooper Lane in *Henderson* NC 23-28 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.). One seen at Lake Murray in southwestern *Newberry* SC 3 Feb (Marion Clark) was unusual for that area. The pair that wintered around Beaufort *Carteret* NC again this year were last seen 12 Mar (Chandra Biggerstaff).

American Avocet: 600 at Bear Island WMA, Colleton SC, 9 Feb (Christopher Davies, et al.) was a remarkable count.

Wilson's Plover: 15 on Harbor Island *Beaufort* SC 17 Feb (Tammy Hester) was a notable count for the winter period. It's likely that at least some of those birds wintered south of the Carolinas and were already moving northward along the coast. One on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 10 Feb (John Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft) was the northernmost sighting made this winter.

Long-billed Curlew: This winter's sightings were of two at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 16 Dec (John Cox, et al.), four at the mouth of Big Bay Creek in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 23 Dec (Sidney Gauthreaux) with three continuing there through 10 Feb (m. obs.), and one on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 10 Feb (John Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft).

Bar-tailed Godwit: One, almost certainly one of the two seen there 18 Nov (Haven Wiley) and probably the same individual that wintered at the site the previous two years, was seen on east Shackleford Banks *Carteret* NC 12 Jan (John Fussell, Marty Wall), 10 Feb (Fussell, Suzanne Wheatcraft) and 23 Mar (Jesse Anderson).

Hudsonian Godwit: One photographed at North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 8 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, et al.) was very late.

Spotted Sandpiper: Farthest inland were individuals at Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 3-12 Dec (Lucas Bobay, m. obs.), at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 22 Dec (Matt Janson, et al.), at University Lake *Orange* NC 23 Dec (Jan Hansen), in Clemson *Pickens* SC 4-10 Jan (Kevin Kubach), and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 26 Jan through 24 Feb (m. obs.).

Great Skua: Individuals were seen on Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 26 Jan and 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Notably, the latter sighting was made south of Diamonds Shoals, "just a few miles off the beach."

Parasitic Jaeger: Seven in flight off the end of Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 7 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra) was a noteworthy 'from-shore' total.

Dovekie: A few sightings were made along the Outer Banks beginning in late December with six+ in flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC 27 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger, Kate Sutherland) being the high count. One in flight off Johnnie Mercer's Pier *New Hanover* NC 12 Jan (Sam Cooper) was the only sighting made south of Dare County.

Common Murre: One was seen and well-photographed during a Seabirding pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 18 Jan (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Thick-billed Murre: One, possibly sick or injured, was photographed on the ocean off Kill Devil Hills *Dare* NC 2 Feb (Stephen Garvey).

Razorbill: There was a moderate irruption along the Outer Banks beginning in late December. 1100 off Cape Point *Dare* NC 19 Jan (Ed Corey, et al.) and 2000 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 9 Feb (Andrew Thornton) were two of the higher counts. Only a

few sightings were made south of Cape Point, the southernmost being an individual off the Folly Beach Fishing Pier *Charleston* SC 25 Jan (Edward Patten).

Black Guillemot: One seen and photographed around the pilings of Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 26 Dec (Jacob Farmer, Josh Sims, m. obs.) was only a one-day-wonder. Already accepted by the NC BRC, this report provided the third official record for NC, and the first with photographs.

Black-legged Kittiwake: This species made an incredible flight off Cape Point *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec, when 89, mostly first-year birds, were counted flying eastward around the cape (Kyle Kittelberger, Kate Sutherland). Kittiwakes continued to be seen there, albeit in single-digit numbers, through 31 Dec (m. obs.). In February, a first-year bird was photographed on the beach there 16 Feb (Jonathan Cantrell, Matt Spangler).

Black-headed Gull: Adults continued from fall at the Georgetown WTP *Georgetown* SC 22 Nov (Ritch Lilly) through 19 Jan (m. obs.), and at Mason Inlet *New Hanover* NC 5 Nov (Jamie Adams) intermittently through 3 Mar (Ricky Davis). A first-year bird photographed at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC during the ACE Basin CBC 30 Dec (Carl Miller, et al.) was a first for that count.

Little Gull: Individual adults were seen off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 27 Dec (Jack Rogers) and 12 Jan (Michael Gosselin, Jeff Lewis), and during Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 26 Jan and 2 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Two adults were seen amongst Bonaparte's Gulls over the surf a few miles north of Jennette's Pier 3 Feb (Scott Barnes, Linda Mack).

Laughing Gull: Individuals at Lake Benson *Wake* NC 15 Dec (*fide* John Connors) and at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 22 Feb (Eddie Owens) were unusual for the Piedmont region during the winter period.

Iceland Gull: A first-winter bird photographed on the beach in Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 23 Feb (Tom Parmeter) was a great find for a site away from the Outer Banks. All other sightings this winter were made in *Dare* NC. Individuals were seen on the beach in Kill Devil Hills 14 Dec (Al Hooks, Alan MacEachren, Audrey Whitlock), on the beach on the south side of Oregon Inlet 17 Dec (Peggy Eubank, MacEachren, Whitlock) and 22 Dec (Steve Ritt), at Cape Point 28 Dec through 29 Jan (Jack Rogers, m. obs.), and on Seabirding pelagic trips out of Hatteras 26 Jan, 2 Feb, 10 Feb and 17 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). Three on a Seabirding pelagic trip 18 Feb (Patteson, Sutherland, et al.) was a great count.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 213 in Kitty Hawk *Dare* NC during its CBC 15 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis) was a good count for that part of the Outer Banks. 18 on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 9 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra) was a notable count for a site in the Piedmont.

Glaucous Gull: A first-year bird seen and photographed on Lake Norman *Iredell* and *Mecklenburg* NC during the Southern Lake Norman CBC 16 Dec (Dennis Kent, John Scavetto, Chris Talkington) and continuing through 18 Dec (m. obs.) was a first for the greater Charlotte area. In *Dare* NC, first-year individuals were seen around Pea Island NWR 25 Nov (Jeff Lewis) throughout the period into spring (m. obs.), at Cape Point 31 Dec (Jacob Farmer, Nathan Gatto) through 16 Feb (Jonathan Cantrell, Matt Spangler), and on a Seabirding pelagic trip out of Hatteras 2 Feb (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Red-throated Loon: Sightings on inland reservoirs involved one just above the dam on Lake Gaston *Northampton* NC 9 Feb (Ricky Davis), one on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 1-6 Feb (Jelmer Poelstra), two on Jordan Lake 3 Feb (Stacy & Natalie Barbour), and two on Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 14 Feb (Marty Wall).

Pacific Loon: One seen on Kerr Lake near Nutbush Bridge *Vance* NC 19 Dec (Bruce Young) may have been the same individual seen on that lake from nearby Satterwhite Point 22-25 Nov (Jeffrey Blalock, m. obs.).

Manx Shearwater: An impressive northbound flight took place along the Outer Banks in early January with 100 off Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 2 Jan (Peggy Eubank, Audrey Whitlock), four off Cape Point *Dare* NC 3 Jan (Alan MacEachren), and 29 off Jennette's Pier 7 Jan (Jelmer Poelstra).

Wood Stork: A few immature birds that wandered around eastern NC were unusual for the winter period—one on Harkers Island *Carteret* 19 Jan (Karen Altman), one in Merritt *Pamlico* 28 Jan (Allan Porter), one in Manns Harbor *Dare* 30 Jan through 5 Feb (Sherry Foreman, m. obs.), two in Folkstone *Onslow* 5 Jan (Gilbert Grant), and two in New Bern *Craven* 20-25 Feb (Michael Cheves, m. obs.).

Great Cormorant: Seven at Masonboro Inlet *New Hanover* NC during the Wilmington CBC 29 Dec (Sam Cooper) was this winter's high count. The only sighting made south of Cape Fear this winter was of one on a jetty at the entrance of Charleston Harbor *Charleston* SC 17 Jan (John Cox).

American White Pelican: This species' annual (at least since 2007) early spring feeding congregation below the dam on High Rock Lake *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC began with 20 pelicans 9 Feb (Jesse Anderson). 50 were seen there by 19 Feb (Liz Cope) and numbers continued to increase in March. Not too surprisingly, hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants were reported feeding below the dam at the same time.

American Bittern: One photographed at Biltmore Lagoon *Buncombe* NC 5 Jan (William Ensign) was very unusual for the mountain region in mid-winter.

Great Egret: One at Ecusta Pond *Transylvania* NC 1-7 Dec (Michael Plauché, m. obs.) was late for a site in the mountain region.

Reddish Egret: One lingered on East Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC from fall until at least 17 Jan (Aaron Given, m. obs.).

Glossy Ibis: North of the species' typical winter range were two+ at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC throughout the winter into March (m. obs.) and up to 32 in flooded agricultural fields southeast of Lake Landing *Hyde* NC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan) through 12 Jan (Ricky Davis).

Roseate Spoonbill: Record counts on several CBCs along the SC coast may have been an after-effect of the 2018 northward irruption.

Golden Eagle: Sightings included a first-year bird photographed at Congaree National Park *Richland* SC during the Congaree Swamp CBC 16 Dec (Brad Dalton), a second-year bird at the Savannah River Site (restricted access) *Barnwell* SC 28 Jan (Raymond Geroso) and along nearby Burma Rd in *Aiken* SC 25 Feb (Matt Malin), and an adult in Fairfield Harbor *Craven* NC 22 Feb (Rob Tarkenton).

Northern Goshawk: An adult seen along Florence Rd in *Pamlico* NC during its CBC 18 Dec (Ronnie Hewlette, Christine Stoughton-Root) was the only one reported this winter.

Red-tailed Hawk: A "Krider's Hawk" variant Red-tailed Hawk was photographed at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* SC 13 Dec and 5 Jan (Steve Calver, et al.).

Short-eared Owl: Individuals on the south side of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 6 Dec (Michael Gosselin) and 7 Dec (Karen Lebing), along Daughtry Rd in *Cumberland* NC during its CBC 20 Dec (*fide* Brian Bockhahn), and at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 29 Dec (Mark Kosiewski) were unusual for those sites.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: A moribund individual was found along US-70 near Oyster Creek in *Carteret* NC 5 Dec (*fide* Sam Cooper). Two were heard at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC, in the trees between the aquarium and the ferry terminal, 6 Dec (Cooper) with one continuing through the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC 30 Dec (Ricky Davis). Along the entrance road to the Bodie Island Lighthouse *Dare* NC, a traditional roosting site for one or two saw-whets some winters, one was seen and heard 16 Dec (Jesse Pope, Gordon Warburton), two were heard calling 19-23 Dec (Susan Mac, Steve McInnis, m. obs.), and one continued at the site through 17 Feb (m. obs.). One heard responding to playback in *Rockingham* NC during its CBC 26 Dec (Marty Wall, Danny Yount) was a good find for a site in the Piedmont.

Tropical/Couch's Kingbird: One, either a Tropical Kingbird or a Couch's Kingbird, was reportedly briefly seen near the gazebo at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC during the Southport-Bald Head-Oak Islands CBC 30 Dec (*fide* Ron Clark).

Western Kingbird: Sightings, quite numerous this winter, included one continuing in *Georgetown* SC from 23 Nov (Craig Watson) through 2 Jan (Caroline Eastman), one in

the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR *Washington* NC 1 Dec (Jamie Adams, m. obs.), one at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC 1 Dec (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, et al.), one at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 4 Dec and 23 Dec (John Fussell, et al.), one along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 11-14 Dec (Greg Hudson, m. obs.), one at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 13 Dec through 23 Mar (David Perry, m. obs.), one on north Folly Island *Charleston* SC 15 Dec (Chris Snook), one at James Island County Park *Charleston* SC 18 Dec through 26 Feb (Irvin Pitts, m. obs.), two at Ft Moultrie 25 Dec through 7 Jan (Marc Regnier, m. obs.), one at Glenburnie Park *Craven* NC 2 Jan (Lester Coble), one at the north end of Ocracoke Island *Hyde* NC 5 Jan (Susan Campbell), and two at James Island County Park 7-25 Jan (Andy Harrison, m. obs.).

Say's Phoebe: Pending review by the SC BRC was the report of an apparent Say's Phoebe seen and photographed at Clemson University's Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 6 Dec through 2 Feb (George McHenry, m. obs.).

Common Raven: 18 in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 23 Dec (Marty Wall) was a noteworthy count. Two heard and then seen flying north along I-95 near Four Oaks *Johnston* NC 15 Jan (Conor McKearney) were very unusual east of the fall line. One captured by a trail camera in north *Cabarrus* NC 26 Jan (Mike Walter) was unusual for that area.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One photographed at Lake Busbee *Horry* SC 7 Dec (John Hutchens) was late to depart.

Bank Swallow: One photographed at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 10 Feb (Dave Eslinger, et al.) was an incredible find for the winter period. There are only four previous records of this small swallow in the Carolinas during the winter.

Cave Swallow: One or more were seen over Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 16 Nov through 12 Dec (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.) with a high count of four made there 8 Dec (Ian Hearn, William Hearn).

Barn Swallow: Individuals at Annandale Plantation *Georgetown* SC during the Winyah Bay CBC 20 Dec (Jack Rogers) and along River Rd at Alligator River NWR *Dare* NC 18 Jan (Ricky Davis) were very late.

Swainson's Thrush: An individual seen and photographed at Beaver Lake *Buncombe* NC 2-6 Jan (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) was incredibly late and a first for the mountain region in winter.

Evening Grosbeak: This large finch staged a small irruption into the northern half of NC this winter. Sightings included one at a feeder in Williamston *Martin* NC 8 Dec (Angela Bagley), three at a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 9 Dec (Maria de Bruyn), one in *Durham* NC 16 Dec (Tom Driscoll, et al.), one at a feeder in Granite Falls *Caldwell* NC 30 Dec (Arlene Neal), one heard calling in *Durham* NC 13 Jan (Jeff Pippen), and one heard calling in *Nash* NC 17 Jan (Sam Cooper).

Purple Finch: This irruptive finch was well-reported this winter, with high counts near 40 in both states.

Pine Siskin: This finch was also well-reported this winter, with high counts nearing 100 at some sites in mid-February.

Lapland Longspur: One heard and then seen along Butler Bridge Rd in *Henderson* NC 15 Dec (Simon Thompson, Steve Yurkovich) was the only one reported this winter.

Snow Bunting: Two were seen and photographed by many at Huntington Beach SP, near the base of the jetty on the south side of Murrells Inlet, *Georgetown* SC 19 Dec through 3 Feb (Ritch Lilly, m. obs.).

Lark Sparrow: Up to three visited a feeder along Alder Branch Rd in *Camden* NC 11 Jan into spring (James Harrison). Individuals were seen at Willow Dale Cemetery in Goldsboro *Wayne* NC 15 Dec through 1 Feb (Mary Bridges, m. obs.), at Myrtle Beach SP *Horry* SC 10 Jan into spring (John Hutchens, m. obs.), and at the Simpson Research Station *Anderson* SC 18 Jan (Joe & Liz Dunkleman).

Golden-crowned Sparrow: Already accepted by the NC BRC was the report with photographs of an immature Golden-crowned Sparrow foraging with White-throated Sparrows behind a gas station in Harbinger *Currituck* NC 22 Dec through 14 Feb (Steve Ritt, m. obs.). This report provided the first official record of the species in NC.

Yellow-breasted Chat: Lingering or over-wintering were individuals in Washington *Beaufort* NC 12 Dec, 20 Jan and 5 Feb (Betsy Kane), at Airlie Gardens *New Hanover* NC 13 Dec (Jim Holcomb), at Foxcroft Lake *Wake* NC 22 Dec (Jason O'Connor), at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 29 Dec (Allen Bryan), at Lake Raleigh *Wake* NC 5-7 Jan (Edward Landi, m. obs.), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 16 Jan (John Cox) and possibly the same individual visiting feeders across town 16 Feb (Sally West) and 23 Feb (Jim Buxton, et al.), at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 19 Jan (Sidney Gauthreaux), and at New Field, Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 27 Jan (Courtney Check, et al.).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were found amongst other species of blackbirds on the lawn around the monument at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 12 Dec (Mark Jones, *fide* Sam Cooper), in a field along Stewart Rd in *Greenville* SC 27 Jan (Simon Harvey), and along US-264 west of Lake Mattamuskeet *Hyde* NC 16 Feb (Jamie Adams).

Baltimore Oriole: A total of 33 visiting feeders in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 12 Jan (Russell & Lacy Johnson) was a fantastic count.

Brewer's Blackbird: For a fourth winter in a row Brewer's Blackbirds were seen in a horse enclosure along Gum Swamp Rd in *Hyde* NC, 29 Dec through 26 Feb (m. obs.), with a high count of 16 made there 5 Jan (Michael Gosselin, et al.).

Ovenbird: Though a few are typically reported at sites along the coast each winter, one well-seen near Cullowhee *Jackson* NC 21 Jan (Jeremy Hyman) was incredibly unusual for the mountains in winter.

Louisiana Waterthrush: One heard and then seen at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 23 Feb (Irvin Pitts) was very early.

Northern Waterthrush: Lingering or over-wintering in the SC coastal plain were two at the Savannah Spoil Site (restricted access) *Jasper* 5 Jan (Lewis Burke, Roger Smith), one at Santee NWR *Clarendon* 11 Jan (Irvin Pitts) and 2 Feb (Donna & Harold Donnelly), one at Charleston Southern University *Charleston* 15 Jan (David Perry), and one at Savannah NWR *Jasper* 16-27 Jan (Donald Thompson, m. obs.).

Waterthrush sp.: A waterthrush heard calling in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (John Fussell) was probably a Northern Waterthrush.

Nashville Warbler: Individuals were seen around the aquarium pond at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 23 Jan through 2 Feb (Jim Holcomb, m. obs.) and at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 28 Jan through 1 Feb (Keith McCullough, m. obs.).

American Redstart: Individuals at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 4 Dec (Phil McNeil) and 5-27 Jan (John Hammond, m. obs.) and at Saluda Shoals Park *Lexington* SC 10 Feb and 23 Feb (Patricia Voelker, m. obs.) were great finds for winter.

Cape May Warbler: Individuals seen visiting a feeder in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 31 Dec through 5 Jan (Sam Cooper, m. obs.), around Swan Lake at Furman University *Greenville* SC 25 Jan (Joan Baker, et al.) and 5 Feb (Denise DuPon), and at a feeder in Rock Hill *York* SC 26 Feb (Bob Olson) were fantastic for winter. Sightings of lingering/over-wintering Cape May Warblers, most of birds visiting suet feeders, have steadily increased over the past couple of decades.

Bay-breasted Warbler: One seen at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC during the McClellanville CBC 16 Dec (Ed Blitch, et al.) was incredibly late.

Yellow Warbler: Individuals at Santee Coastal Reserve *Charleston* SC during the McClellanville CBC 16 Dec (Charles Donnelly) and at Demetre Park *Charleston* SC 15-19 Jan (Nicole-Marie Pettinelli, m. obs.) were great finds for winter.

Yellow-throated Warbler: The northernmost sightings were of one on the campus of Davidson College *Mecklenburg* NC throughout the period (Eric Keith, m. obs.), one at a feeder in northern *Union* NC 9 Dec (Ed Simpson), one at a feeder in Chapel Hill *Orange* NC 9 Dec through 31 Jan (Lillian Brown, m. obs.), one in Buxton Woods *Dare* NC during the Cape Hatteras CBC 27 Dec (John Fussell), and one at a feeder in *Pasquotank* NC 29 Jan through 9 Feb (Greg Hudson).

Wilson's Warbler: One photographed in Clemson *Pickens* SC 4 Dec (Linda Montgomery) was likely a very late fall migrant, while one at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 27-30 Jan (Charles Donnelly, m. obs.) must have been over-wintering along the coast.

Summer Tanager: A female visited a feeder in eastern *Brunswick* NC for a fifth winter in a row 2 Dec into spring (Greg Massey).

Western Tanager: Individuals visited feeders in Salisbury *Rowan* NC 5-12 Dec (Ann Brownlee) and 6-12 Mar (m. obs.), in Fort Mill *York* SC 8-10 Dec (Stephen Thomas), in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (*fide* Sam Cooper), on James Island *Charleston* SC 29 Dec through 30 Jan (Jennifer Tyrrell, m. obs.), in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 1-11 Jan (Craig Watson), in a different yard in Mt Pleasant 14 Jan through 21 Feb (Elizabeth Anderegg), in a different yard in Wilmington 27 Jan through 17 Mar (Amy McLane, m. obs.), in western *Johnston* NC 5 Feb (Mary Ann Booth), in Raleigh *Wake* NC 10 Feb through 25 Mar (Sam Jolly, m. obs.), and in a different yard on James Island 11 Feb through 22 Mar (Barbara Spence). One photographed at the east end of Pettigrew SP *Tyrrell* NC during its CBC 29 Dec (Floyd & Signa Williams, Ed Corey) was a first for that area of NC.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Immature males photographed at feeders in eastern *Johnston* 17 Feb (Scott Schulz) and in Mt Pleasant *Charleston* SC 28 Feb through 3 Mar (Dennis Forsythe, m. obs.) were very unusual for the winter period.

Indigo Bunting: A female/immature-type bird in Wanchese *Dare* NC during the Bodie-Pea Island CBC 28 Dec (Kyle Kittelberger) was a great find for winter.

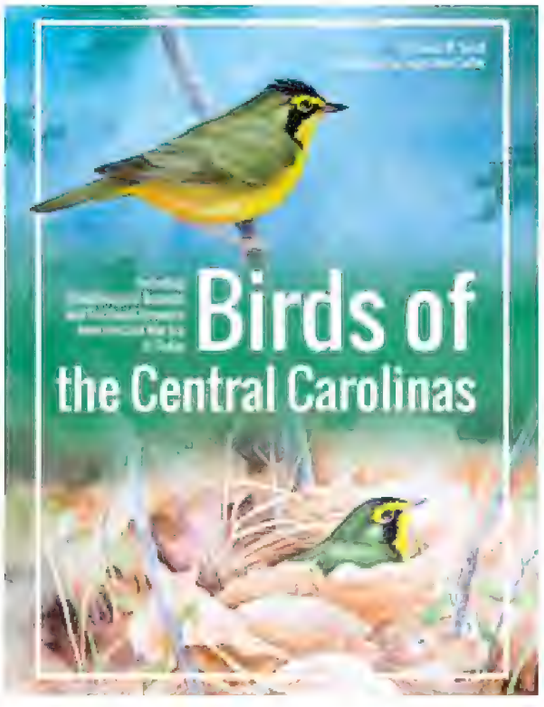
Painted Bunting: Individual males visiting feeders in *Spartanburg* SC 27 Jan through 15 Feb (David Campbell, m. obs.) and in Endy *Stanly* NC 25 Dec through 5 Jan (Kyle Cook, m. obs.) were unusual for sites so far from the coast.

Dickcissel: Individuals at Savannah NWR *Jasper* SC 26 Dec (Christopher Burney), in Harbinger *Currituck* NC 30 Dec through 4 Feb (Mark Anthony, m. obs.), and at Lake Johnson *Wake* NC 3 Jan (Niki Robertson) were unusual for winter.

Corrigendum: In the Fall 2018 "Briefs for the Files," the date given for the last sighting of the Townsend's Warbler at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC was incorrect. The correct date is 3 Oct (Sam Cooper).

Birders' Book Review
Birds of the Central Carolinas

Steve Shultz



Birds of the Central Carolinas
Donald W. Seriff with
illustrations by Leigh Ann Carter
ISBN 978-0692-05539-7
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$45 www.meckbirds.org

In 1885 Russian Tsar Alexander III presented Empress Maria Feodorovna, his wife, with the first Fabergé Imperial Easter Egg. Over the next 32 years (with a short intermission due to the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-1905) Carl Fabergé delivered a bespoke egg every spring to the royal family. Each imperial egg impressed even the most discerning eye with unequalled craftsmanship and attention to detail. And that was simply the "cover", for this first impression was only the beginning, as each egg contained something very special once opened. Be it a miniature coronation coach, swan, or palace, the detail contained within the shell was nothing less than stunning.

And what, pray tell, does this little history vignette have to do with birds, birding, or most specifically, book reviews of material pertaining to the Carolinas? Well, one might note that the 1911 Bay Tree Egg featured a tiny, singing songbird as its "surprise", but I would like to make the case that *Birds of the Central Carolinas* by Donald W. Seriff, with illustrations by Leigh Ann Carter, in many ways parallels those bejeweled gifts of spring.

Birds of the Central Carolinas impresses right out of the box (or gift bag as the case may be). Of impressive heft and obvious quality, the Smyth sewn volume spans 608 pages and includes more than 400 photographs and 312 illustrations. An example of impressive detail, photographs taken in the Central Carolinas accompany nearly all species encountered within the book's scope.

And like those eggs, the more closely one looks, the more impressive the details become. From the front and back inside covers, which show an 1877 map of downtown Charlotte overlaid with then-contemporary bird sightings, to jewels embedded within species accounts (did you know that a folk name for Tricolored Heron is "Lady of the Lake"?) surprises abound.

Beginning with a brief history of ornithology in the Carolinas, the book soon comes to the yolk of this fit-for-a-queen volume: species accounts listing records from the Civil War Era to present, each accompanied by a Breeding Bird Atlas grid map showing

breeding status in the Central Piedmont. Just skimming through to appreciate folk names and historical accounts promises an evening of enjoyment and answers questions including: "which breeding bird is called the *Quock*?", and "what bird interrupted a 1913 Charlotte Hornets baseball game, potentially affecting the outcome?"

Some 538 pages into the work, the reader comes to material that includes a list of exotic species found near the Queen City, an aggregation of nearly 20 years of Christmas Bird Count data, a melancholy gallery of "lost birds", photographic line-up of imperiled species, and then a recipe on how the reader can aide birds through creation of cavity nesting boxes (with plans) and even instructions on how to create the perfect homemade suet.

Although the title may suggest a more parochial interest, birders throughout the Carolinas and beyond are well-served by the detail, historical information, and beauty of this impressive work. And though the local bookshelf may sag with combined weight from various field guides and volumes promising "easy identification" and "better birding now", *Birds of the Central Carolinas* deserves a prominent spot, or as this reviewer noted on a recent visit to a birder's home, makes a great coffee table centerpiece as well. While that Fabergé egg may be out of financial reach of most, Don Seriff's work will provide much the same pleasure at just a tiny fraction of the cost!

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The Chat

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Cover: Limpkin, 22 May 2019, Mecklenburg County, NC
Photo by Rob Van Epps

House Wren Breeding Range Expansion in the Piedmont of the Upper Pee Dee Region of the Carolinas

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Abstract

The House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) has slowly expanded its breeding range to the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas within the last 25-30 years. The current range front in the Piedmont now extends from northwest Chesterfield County in South Carolina (SC) to Anson and Montgomery counties in North Carolina (NC) and eastward to the fall line at Rockingham, Richmond County, NC, where breeding was confirmed in 2017. Within this occupied area, House Wrens breed in residential areas of nearly all towns with a human population of ≥850 persons.

The direction of recent range expansion to Rockingham is most consistent with movement from the Piedmont (i.e., from the west-northwest), although movement from the Sandhills (i.e., from the northeast) cannot be ruled out. The current breeding distribution of House Wren in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas exhibits aspects of both stepwise movements and leap-frog range expansion.

Introduction

Most range expansions by avian species within southeastern North America are closely associated with altered habitats (Greenlaw et al. 2014), including habitats modified by anthropogenic activities in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas (McNair 2013, McNair 2016, McNair 2017). In North Carolina, the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) was scarce as a breeder in the Coastal Plain until the 1970s (LeGrand et al. 2018).

Odum and associates investigated the breeding expansion of House Wren in southeastern North America (Odum and Burleigh 1946, Odum and Johnston 1951, Odum et al. 1993). The initial breeding range expansion into North Carolina to the Piedmont occurred in the 1920s to the early 1930s (Odum and Burleigh 1946, Odum and Johnston 1951, Seriff 2018). House Wrens also expanded their breeding range from Virginia into the extreme eastern Coastal Plain south to Beaufort, NC (Burleigh 1937).

House Wrens continued their breeding range expansion in a series of sequential steps to the Piedmont of South Carolina, and then Georgia, reaching Athens in 1950 (Odum and Johnston 1951). This physiographic province ends in eastern Alabama, where breeding has only been confirmed at one site within the Auburn-Opelika metropolitan statistical area in 2000 (Haggerty 2009, Hill 2018). Breeding House Wrens have not reached the Coastal Plain of South Carolina or Georgia, except at isolated sites in a few of the largest cities along the fall line at Columbia, Augusta, and Macon (Cely 2003a, Waters and Belger 2002, Schneider 2013). In the southeastern plains of Alabama, House Wrens have apparently nested at only one very isolated site in 2005 at Lake Dannelly, a rural area along the Alabama River in 2005 (Haggerty 2009).

In North Carolina, House Wrens still occur along or near the coast, with a spotty distribution in the northern half of the Coastal Plain. In the southern Coastal Plain of North Carolina, a wide gap in breeding distribution still exists between birds that nest in non-anthropogenic habitats (i.e., recently burned pocosins) in the lower Coastal Plain and in anthropogenic habitats (i.e., cities and towns where nest boxes have become more widely available) along the fringe of the upper Coastal Plain in the Sandhills subregion (LeGrand et al. 2018; McNair and Stanback in press).

The breeding range of the House Wren in the northern Piedmont of North Carolina had spread eastward to the fall line by the 1960s and 1970s (Hader 1969, LeGrand et al. 2018). Breeding in Raleigh was first documented in 1924 (Pearson 1934) and likely began in Chapel Hill during 1933-1935, where they are now well-established (Odum et al. 1935, Hader 1969, Mason et al. 2007).

In the southern North Carolina Piedmont, House Wrens were first reported during the breeding season at Davidson in 1928 (Pearson 1934, Seriff 2018) and first nested at Charlotte and New London (Stanly County) in 1933 and 1943 (Clarkson 1940, Trott 1943, Seriff 2018), respectively. Further east, however, Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data (three routes: Biscoe, Wilgrove, and Uwharrie National Forest, the latter route now inactive) yielded records beginning in the early 1990s, although these routes did not commence until then (Sauer et al. 2017). LeGrand et al. (2018) and Seriff (2018) stated that House Wrens bred across the entire North Carolina Piedmont, but that confirmed nest records were lacking from Anson, Montgomery, and Richmond counties (LeGrand and Seriff, pers. comm.). Breeding House Wrens from the eastern Piedmont of South Carolina in the upper Pee Dee region are unknown (Post and Gauthreaux 1989, McNair and Post 1993, Cely 2003b).

The purpose of this study was to document the breeding status of House Wrens in the Piedmont of the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas and their pattern of spread in anthropogenic environments. In this paper, I document their breeding status within a portion of a six-county area of the upper Pee Dee region. This includes unpublished breeding evidence of House Wrens from several towns in Anson and Montgomery counties, NC, in 1994 and establishment of a breeding population in 2017-2018 at Rockingham, NC, the largest city along the fall line in close proximity (18 km) to the South Carolina state line.

Using 2018 data, I address one question: Is the current breeding distribution in the study area more consistent with a leap-frog (Odum and Burleigh 1946, Odum and Johnston 1951, Odum et al. 1993) or a step-wise range expansion? This requires me to determine whether the presence of breeding House Wrens in cities and towns at the edge of the species' range is related to the local size or density of the human population and how this may influence the direction and rate of the current range expansion.

Field Site Description

The upper Pee Dee region as defined herein includes six counties or portions thereof in two states, and a total of 29 cities and towns ranging in human population size from 110 in McFarlan, NC to 9080 in Rockingham, NC (Table 1). The number of housing units is typically a better measure of urbanization than population censuses (Brown et al. 2005), and data for each variable are available down to the level of cities and towns (U.S.

Census Bureau 2017). However, in this study both variables are strongly correlated for the above-mentioned 29 cities and towns (Spearman's r = 0.96, P< 0.0001), although Polkton (Anson County, NC) and Wallace (Marlboro County, SC) have disproportionately low numbers of housing units compared to their populations. Nonetheless, I used population census data as the measure of urbanization for locations in the upper Pee Dee region because of its greater familiarity to most people.

Table 1. Population Size of 29 Cities and Towns Sampled for House Wrens. Towns and cities are within a six-county area near and at the edge of their breeding range in the Upper Pee Dee Region of the Carolinas. Cities and towns are listed in order by physiographic province, state, and county

Physiographic Province	State	County	City or Town	Population Size[a]
Piedmont	NC	Montgomery	Troy	3,414
Piedmont	NC	Montgomery	Star	868
Piedmont	NC	Montgomery	Biscoe	1,679
Piedmont	NC	Montgomery	Mount Gilead	1,171
Piedmont	NC	Anson	Peachland	411
Piedmont	NC	Anson	Polkton	3,444
Piedmont	NC	Anson	Ansonville	591
Piedmont	NC	Anson	Wadesboro	5,467
Piedmont	NC	Anson	Lilesville	501
Piedmont	NC	Moore	Robbins	1,180
Piedmont	SC	Chesterfield	Pageland	2,704
Piedmont	SC	Chesterfield	Jefferson	742
Piedmont	SC	Chesterfield	Mount Croghan	194
Piedmont	SC	Chesterfield	Ruby	351
Piedmont	SC	Chesterfield	Chesterfield	1,452
Fall Line	NC	Montgomery	Candor	832
Fall Line	NC	Anson	Morven	460
Fall Line	NC	Anson	McFarlan	110
Fall Line	NC	Richmond	Cordova	1,775[b]
Fall Line	NC	Richmond	Rockingham	9,080
Fall Line	SC	Marlboro	Wallace	2,606[c]
Fall Line	SC	Chesterfield	Cheraw	5,780
Sandhills	NC	Moore	Carthage	2,438
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	Norman	132
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	Ellerbe	986
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	Hoffman	560
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	East Rockingham	3,885[b]
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	Dobbins Heights	822
Sandhills	NC	Richmond	Hamlet	6,391

[a] *U.S. Census Bureau (2017): Resident population estimate of 1 July 2016.*
[b] *U.S. Census Bureau (2017): Resident census of 1 April 2010—Census-designated places (CDP).*
[c] *U.S. Census Bureau (2017): Resident census of 1 April 2000—CDP and unincorporated community.*

Survey Effort

Rockingham—I surveyed Rockingham, NC for breeding House Wrens on five dates from 28 April to 29 May 2017. I returned to Rockingham on 28 and 30 October 2017 to examine contents of nest boxes. If the nest box was accessible, I could determine whether a male was paired by the presence of a distinct and lined nest cup, which is constructed solely by the female (Kennedy and White 1992, Alworth and Schieber 2000, Johnson 2014).

Based on the area occupied by wrens in 2017, I surveyed a larger study area (316 ha) in a residential section of Rockingham in 2018 in which I anticipated House Wrens may be present. I surveyed the study area weekly between 06:30 DST and 09:45 DST from 6 May to 17 June, by driving slowly (6-20 km/hr) with the windows down, stopping frequently, and occasionally walking, listening for singing males. Median survey time was 140 minutes (Q1-Q3 = 130-158 min, min-max = 90-185 min, n = 7).

All cities and towns—In 2018, I surveyed singing male House Wrens at the aforementioned 29 cities and towns twice each from mid-April to early May and recorded whether potential breeding birds were present or absent. This includes other areas of Rockingham outside the above study area. Territorial male House Wrens in the central Piedmont of North Carolina may begin singing in early April and start nest-building in early to mid-April (Stanback et al. 2013; Stanback 2018), although some males may not establish territories and begin singing until mid-May.

I visited each city and town again twice each from mid-May to early June to record whether breeding House Wrens were present or absent. Five cities and towns in Richmond County (Cordova, East Rockingham, Ellerbe, Hamlet, Rockingham) received more frequent surveys. In addition, I twice surveyed portions of Florence, located in the middle Coastal Plain of South Carolina. With a population of 38,288 (U.S. Census Bureau 2017), Florence is the largest city within the Pee Dee region.

Generally, I drove slowly (10-20 km/hr, when possible) through each town searching for House Wrens, supplemented by walking in residential areas with the most favorable habitat (semi-open shrubby vegetation with nest boxes). Surveys occurred during all daylight hours because male House Wrens are voluble all day (Johnson 2014), although most surveys occurred during morning. I made no adjustments for differences in detectability for time of day. Surveys took longest in the largest cities and the time of each survey was recorded to the nearest five minutes. Total survey time was 85.2 hours (median = 35 min; Q1-Q3 = 20-55 min, min-max = 10-180 min, n = 112).

House Wrens were recorded as present after early May if males sang at the same sites in the same town over a period of at least 10 days. I expected males to be more numerous than females at or near the breeding range front (Summerour 1986, Odum et al. 1993, Stanback et al. 2013; McNair, this study). Since unmated males may build dummy nests, the presence of singing males without additional evidence does not constitute evidence of breeding. Nonetheless, I did conclude that breeding occurred if I detected at least four to five singing males within a town since I presumed at least one of these males would be paired with a female (Odum et al. 1993; this study). I did record any additional breeding evidence (e.g., females present, adults delivering food to young in nest boxes), although this was not the focus of these surveys.

Results

Rockingham 2017

A small breeding population was present in Rockingham, Richmond County, NC. I discovered six House Wren territories and confirmed breeding at two of the four sites where I was able to examine all nest boxes (Table 2). All sites were located in one neighborhood of Rockingham, but only two territories were contiguous. All six territories contained nest boxes (and five of six territories contained bird feeders).

Table 2. Six House Wren territories with single singing males in Rockingham, Richmond County, North Carolina in 2017.

Site Number	Search Effort	Female Detected	Other Breeding Evidence	Breeding Confirmed
1	Incomplete (back yard inaccessible in autumn)	no	3 dummy nests	No
2	Incomplete (2 nest box contents inaccessible)	no	2 dummy nests	No
3	Complete	no	2 dummy nests	No
4	Complete	no	1 dummy nest, 1 complete nest	Yes
5	Complete	no	1 dummy nest, 1 complete nest with 1 infertile egg	Yes
6	Complete	no	1 dummy nest	No

Rockingham 2018

One to three singing male House Wrens were present in Rockingham from 15-29 April during late morning and afternoon surveys conducted within the area originally surveyed in 2017. In the expanded study area of 2018, from 20-25 singing males (0.06-0.08/ha or 1 male per 12.64-15.8 ha) were present each week from 6 May to 17 June. Many territories were contiguous. The daily maximum number of singing males detected was 33 on 20 May, when some areas peripheral to the study area were also covered, almost reaching Roberdel, a suburb of Rockingham.

All Cities and Towns 1994

During complete surveys on 14 May in Montgomery County, 17 singing male House Wrens (two active nests examined) were present at Troy and seven singing males (one active nest) were present at Mt. Gilead. G.W. Kelly (Mt. Gilead) informed me that House Wrens had been breeding at nest boxes in his yard since at least 1992. At Wadesboro, Anson County, two singing male House Wrens were present on 15 June 1994.

All Cities and Towns 2018

House Wrens were present at seven cities and towns in 2018, six of them in the Piedmont and the other along the fall line at Rockingham (Figure 1). On 27 April, breeding was confirmed (by examination of complete old nests from 2017) at Wadesboro, Anson County, NC, and on 28 April at Pageland, Chesterfield County, SC. Single singing males visited Lilesville, Anson County, on 27 April and Candor, Montgomery County, from 1-4 May but did not remain.

House Wrens were absent south of an approximate line extending from Pageland in northwestern Chesterfield County, SC, to Wadesboro in Anson County, NC, then east to Rockingham. This absence includes the nearest and largest cities and towns in South Carolina (Chesterfield in the Piedmont; Cheraw and Wallace along the fall line) and North Carolina (Hamlet in the Sandhills).

The smallest town occupied by House Wrens was Star in northeastern Montgomery County, NC where nine singing males were present on 4 May and thereafter. However, Robbins, the larger more easterly town in the Piedmont of northern Moore County, NC, was not occupied. Within the area encompassed by the seven occupied cities and towns, the only town larger than Star without House Wrens was Polkton in Anson County. House Wrens were absent from 22 cities and towns, including Hamlet, the largest of all seven localities in the Sandhills, just 8 km east of Rockingham. House Wrens were also absent from Florence, SC.

Discussion

This study confirms that House Wrens have expanded their breeding range across almost the entire Piedmont within the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas. My observations suggest that House Wrens have nested for at least 24 years in the southeastern Piedmont of North Carolina at Mount Gilead and Troy (Montgomery County) and Wadesboro (Anson County). At some point, House Wrens also extended their breeding range in the Piedmont of South Carolina to Pageland, Chesterfield County (Post and Gauthreaux 1989, McNair and Post 1993). This particular breeding site could have been overlooked before, because coverage and effort were deficient during the South Carolina atlas in the upper Pee Dee region (Cely 2003b).

In the Piedmont of Richmond County, NC, where breeding House Wrens were absent, LeGrand et al. (2018) suggested that the House Wren is an uncommon summer resident. No towns are located in that section of the county, however, where House Wrens do not breed in non-anthropogenic habitat (McNair, pers. obsv.).

House Wrens also do not nest in the Piedmont of Moore County where only one town is present (Robbins), even though this study documents new evidence that House Wrens now breed in Star, a smaller town further to the west in the Piedmont of northeastern Montgomery County.

House Wren
(Troglodytes aedon)
Photo by John Ennis

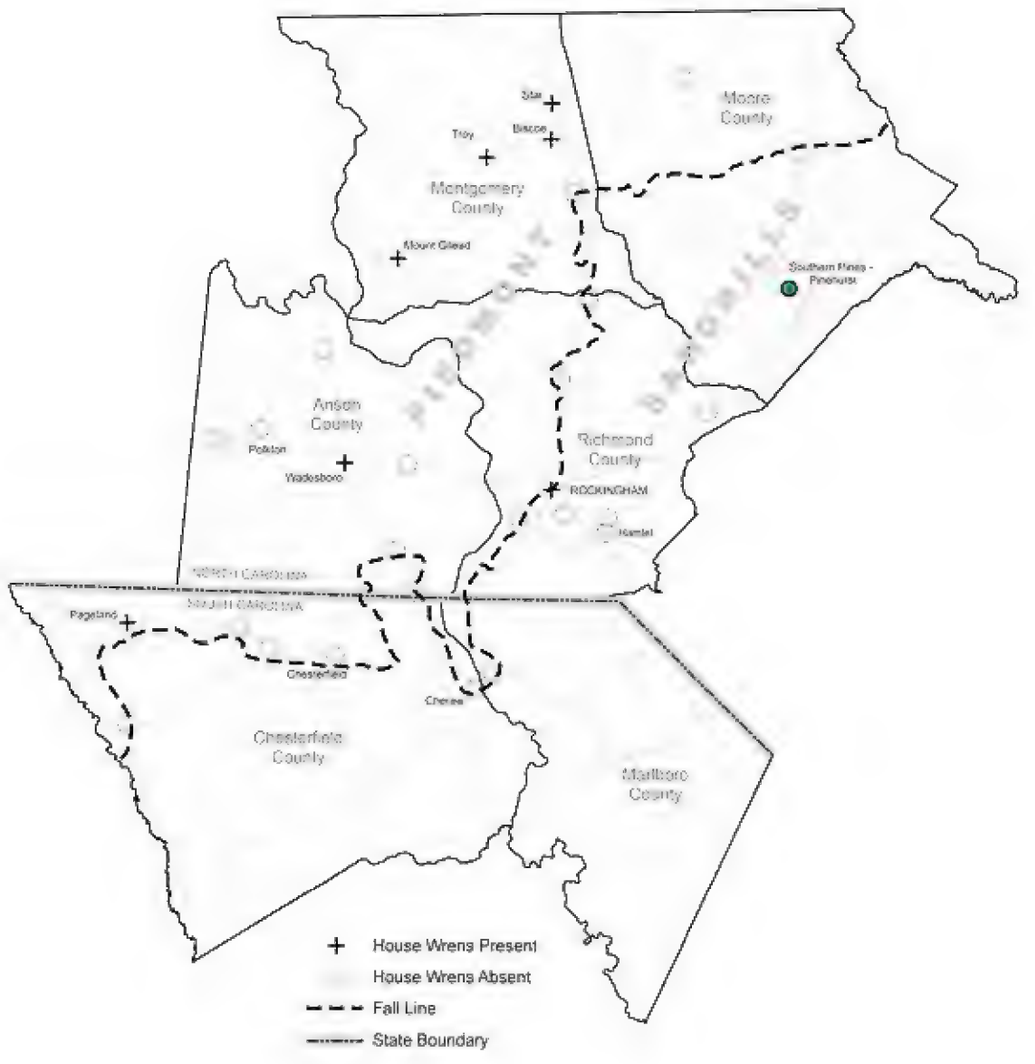

Figure 1. The breeding distribution of House Wrens in 29 cities and towns within six counties of the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas.

The House Wren, a short-distance migrant to the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas (Johnson 2014), has a different migration strategy compared to the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*), a partial migrant (McNair 2016) and Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota),* a long-distance migrant (McNair 2013). The latter two species have had an apparent density-dependent manner of dispersal to this region.

In contrast to the dispersal patterns of these two species, I do not assume that dispersal and expansion of adult House Wrens or their progeny to the upper Pee Dee region has only occurred via short-distance movements of birds from populations on the southern end of their range. Individual House Wrens may arrive near or at the breeding range expansion front in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas. But without marked birds or other direct evidence, the pattern of movement and range expansion and consolidation is conjectural. In the sections below, I present my interpretations based on the best available evidence.

Range Expansion Direction

The only town where House Wrens breed in Richmond County, NC, is one section of Rockingham, along the fall line. Gaps between Rockingham and the nearest North Carolina breeding populations in the Piedmont are 27 km from Wadesboro and 40 km from Mount Gilead and 45 km from the Southern Pines-Pinehurst micropolitan statistical area in the Sandhills (McNair and Stanback in press). These breeding populations in the Piedmont were established before and are closer to Rockingham than breeding populations in the Sandhills. Therefore, it is probable that the direction of range expansion to Rockingham is most consistent with movement from the Piedmont (i.e., from the west-northwest), although movement from the Sandhills (i.e., from the northeast) cannot be ruled out.

Regardless, at their current range front, the pattern of population establishment of House Wrens at Rockingham has been similar to breeding populations at the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area (McNair and Stanback in press), that is, a small population in its first year rapidly expanded in its second year, albeit nine years later at Rockingham.

Range Expansion Rate

Using closest distance measurements (Google Earth Pro 7.3.1), from the initial establishment of House Wren breeding populations in the Piedmont cities of North Carolina in the 1920s to early 1930s (Pearson 1934, Odum and Johnston 1951), it took 84 years for the breeding range to expand from Raleigh ~100 km southwest to the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area. It took 95 years for the range to expand ~105 km from Salisbury southeast to Rockingham. As such, estimated mean rates of expansion are 1.1-1.2 km/yr. This is slower than the rate at which Eastern Phoebes and Cliff Swallows have expanded their breeding range south into the Pee Dee region of South Carolina in recent years (McNair 2013, McNair 2016, McNair 2017).

House Wrens, like Eastern Phoebes and Cliff Swallows, rely on anthropogenic structures for their nest sites in this region. The rate of expansion to reach Rockingham or the Southern Pines-Pinehurst area has been about 14 times slower compared to the 17 years (from 1933 to 1950) it took for House Wrens to expand their range ~271 km from Charlotte, NC, southwest to Athens, Georgia (Odum and Burleigh 1946, Odum and Johnston 1951, Odum et al. 1993), an estimated mean rate of expansion of 15.9 km/yr.

Leap-frog or Step-wise Range Expansion

Odum and Johnston (1951; see Fig. 1 therein) postulated that the breeding range expansion of House Wrens exhibited the leap-frog pattern, in which large gaps occur between establishment of breeding sites at cities and towns near or at the breeding range front before any backfilling may occur at smaller settlements. Thus, cities and towns constitute primary habitat, with cities occupied before towns, while semi-rural anthropogenic environments such as farmyards feature secondary habitats which are filled later. Kennedy and White (2013) suggested that developed areas with abundant nest boxes may be the source of House Wren emigrants to surrounding rural areas.

Where historical information is available from the Carolinas west to Alabama, House Wrens appear to have first occupied the largest metropolitan areas, and then smaller towns, followed by colonization in semi-rural areas such as the now fairly widespread

populations in exurbs and around farmyards near Charlotte and Davidson, NC (LeGrand et al. 2018, Seriff 2018; Stanback 2018). However, available evidence is not fully convincing because observations may be confounded by the geographic bias of greater observer effort in larger cities and towns (Brimley 1939, LeGrand 1975, Keyes 2010).

In the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas, breeding House Wrens have occupied partly open residential areas of cities and towns with a minimum human population size of ~850 individuals, with the exception of Polkton in Anson County, NC. Polkton has a disproportionately low number of houses compared to its population, although its population is larger than five of the seven towns occupied by House Wrens in this study. However, the size of its commercial district is smaller than the smallest town (Star) occupied by breeding House Wrens (McNair, pers. obsv.) even though its population is four times larger. This suggests that the size of a town's commercial district embedded in surrounding residential areas may be an important cue for potential settlement of breeding House Wrens.

Confirmed breeding records of House Wrens from rural areas of south-central North Carolina are still unknown. Thus, the leap-frog pattern of range expansion (Johnston and Odum 1951) appears to be more strongly supported than the step-wise pattern along the current range front of south-central North Carolina, although the slow rate, narrow gaps between occupied cities and towns, long-term site-occupancy at several sites, and non-simultaneous colonization makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between leap-frog and step-wise processes.

The future expansion of the House Wren breeding range front in the upper Pee Dee region of the Carolinas will probably occur in Chesterfield and Cheraw, Chesterfield County, SC, and Hamlet, Richmond County, NC. The gaps between these three unoccupied towns and the nearest towns occupied by House Wrens (Pageland, Wadesboro, Rockingham) are narrow, but I expect colonization will not be simultaneous and it is difficult to predict how soon. Firm population estimates derived via 2018 surveys are available from Rockingham, NC, and from five golf courses at Pinehurst, NC (McNair and Stanback in press). Suitable House Wren habitat and nest strata at these sites are not saturated. In contrast, firm population estimates are unavailable from other occupied sites.

Further south, at large isolated cities, we also lack population estimates for the Auburn-Opelika metropolitan statistical area, Alabama (Haggerty 2009), Macon and Augusta in Georgia (Waters and Belger 2002, Schneider 2013), and Columbia, SC (Cely 2003a) where wide gaps exist between them and the nearest confirmed breeding sites. Confirmed breeding records at three of these four cities were documented in 2000 and 2003, but not thereafter (Breeding-season records of single singing males were present at Auburn each year from 2016-2018; Hill 2018). In contrast, House Wrens were confirmed breeding at Macon in three different years (2004, 2005, 2010; Schneider 2013). As such, House Wrens have not persisted and established themselves at three of these four large cities (or the isolated rural site in the Coastal Plain of Alabama; Haggerty 2009) even though their scale and habitat stability are otherwise highly favorable for long-term site occupancy. This inconsistency of long-term site occupancy along what is largely the former range front weakens the theoretical leap-frog pattern of range expansion for the House Wren in southeastern North America.

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2018 Annual Report of the South Carolina Bird Records Committee

Aaron Given[1], Chair, Giff Beaton, Jeff Click, Lex Glover, Simon Harvey, Chris Hill, Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Steve Wagner

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In 2018, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee acted on 48 new reports, of which 40 were accepted, three were not accepted, and five left unresolved.

The accepted records detailed below add two species to South Carolina's Main List: Tufted Duck and Tropical Kingbird. The Main List now includes 439 species. Say's Phoebe has been elevated from the Provisional I list to the Definitive list based on photographs obtained of a bird in the upstate in April. Tropical/Couch's Kingbird will be dropped from the Hypothetical List.

The annual meeting of the SCBRC was held on 1 December 2018 at Caw Caw Interpretive Center in Ravenel. The meeting was attended by Jeff Click, Aaron Given, Keith McCullough, Irvin Pitts, Will Post, and Steve Wagner. Aaron Given was reelected as Chair. Lex Glover agreed to another term as Secretary. Jeff Click and Chris Hill were reelected to the Nomination Committee.

The Committee agreed to remove Limpkin, Ruff, American White Pelican (inland), and Roseate Spoonbill (inland) from the review list citing over 10 records in recent history. Limpkin and Ruff are becoming almost annual in South Carolina with sometimes multiple individuals in one year. American White Pelicans and Roseate Spoonbills away from the coast are now frequent enough to merit delisting.

In 2017, the Committee discussed creating a potential "auto-accept" policy of eBird reports of certain species (Given et al. 2018). Because the current workload for the committee is not excessive, the Committee decided to not institute the "auto-accept" policy of eBird reports at this time.

Membership change in 2018: Addition of Irvin Pitts, Will Post moving from voting member to Advisory member.

ACCEPTED REPORTS

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). 2018-017. Accept (9-0). Richard Hayes submitted a written report of a Tufted Duck on Bulls Island (Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge) in Charleston County on 17 February 2018. The bird was originally found and photographed by David McLean and David Youngblood on 2 February 2018. This report represents the first record of Tufted Duck in South Carolina.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-002. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of two King Eiders that had been harvested by a hunter (RB Morris) in the ocean off Georgetown County on 23 November 2017. A photo of two female King Eiders was provided by Morris.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-003. Accept (9-0). Jack Rogers and Chris Hill submitted separate reports of a King Eider at the 2nd Avenue Pier in Myrtle Beach (Horry Co.). The bird was originally reported by Ritch Lilly on 7 January 2018 from the same location.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). 2018-026. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Jim Buxton who photographed a King Eider near Sullivan's Island (Charleston Co.) on 9 May 2018. The bird was relocated by many birders until the end of June between Ft. Moultrie and Pitt Street Causeway.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). 2018-001. Accept (9-0). Jack Rogers submitted a written report along with three photos of a Harlequin Duck at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 8 January 2018. This bird was originally photographed by Ritch Lilly on 7 January 2018.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-043. Accept (9-0). Carl Miller submitted a written report of a Common Merganser at James Island County Park (Charleston Co.) on 15 December 2018. This individual hung out in the main pond by the entrance of the park all winter being seen and photographed by many birders.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-045. Accept (9-0). Shawn Smolen-Morton submitted a written report along with photographs of a Common Merganser seen in a residential area of Florence (Florence Co.) on 6 December 2018. This individual was seen on Forest Lake all winter and into early spring.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). 2018-015. Accept (9-0). Christopher Clack submitted a written report along with a photograph of a Red-necked Grebe at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 25 January 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-023. Accept (9-0). Barry Scully submitted a written report of a Limpkin that he photographed at Lake Marion (Sumter Co.) on 1 April 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-028. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from John Grego who photographed a Limpkin at Congaree National Park (Richland Co.) on 12 July 2018.

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*). 2018-029. Accept (9-0). Allison Leigh submitted a written report along with 3 photographs of a Limpkin at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 20 July 2018.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*). 2018-006. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Roger Smith who photographed a Hudsonian Godwit at Orangeburg Sod Farms (Orangeburg Co.) on 9 August 2017.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 2018-007. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Craig Watson and Pam Ford who photographed a Ruff at Santee Coastal Reserve (Charleston Co.) on 17 March 2018.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*). 2018-018. Accept (9-0). Andrew Theus submitted a written report along with a photograph of a Ruff found near Hardeeville (Jasper Co.) on 19 February 2018.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). 2018-038. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with a series of photographs from a specimen collected from Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 8 September 2018. The bird was alive found by a beachgoer and brought to the Nature Center on Kiawah but the bird died shortly after its arrival.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). 2018-039. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Black-headed Gull at the Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant (Georgetown Co.) on 22 November 2018. The bird was seen and photographed by many birders until late January 2019.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). 2018-040. Accept (9-0). Carl Miller submitted a written report of a Black-headed Gull that he photographed at Bear Island National Wildlife Refuge (Colleton Co.) on 30 December 2018.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*). 2018-019. Accept (9-0). Irvin Pitts submitted a written report along with one photograph of a Franklin's Gull at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge (Charleston Co.) on 4 December 2016.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2018-005. Accept (9-0). Martina Nordstrand submitted a written report along with one photograph of an Iceland Gull at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 15 January 2018.

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*). 2018-020. Accept (9-0). Chris Hill submitted a written report of an Iceland Gull that was seen at Bird Island at the Little River Inlet (Horry Co.) on 6 February 2018.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-009. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Irvin Pitts who photographed a Sooty Tern at the north end of the Lake Murray Dam (Lexington Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this coastal species several hundred miles inland.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-010. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Linda Montgomery and photographs by Scott Davis of a Sooty Tern at the Lake Hartwell Overlook (Anderson Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this pelagic species several hundred miles inland.

Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). 2018-011. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on an eBird report by Mark Vukovich and Matt Malin who photographed five Sooty Terns at Scott's Ferry Ramp (McCormick Co.) on 12 September 2017. Tropical Storm Irma moved through South Carolina on 11 September 2017 displacing this coastal species several hundred miles inland.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2018-012. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on a series of photos uploaded to the Carolina Bird Club photo gallery by Meghan Galipeau of a Brown Booby at the Port of Charleston (Charleston Co.) on 8 August 2017.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*). 2018-025. Accept (9-0). Derek Aldrich and Jack Rogers submitted two separate written reports of a Brown Booby at Swan Lake on the campus of Furman University. The bird was seen and photographed by many birders from 26 April 2018 to 30 May 2018.

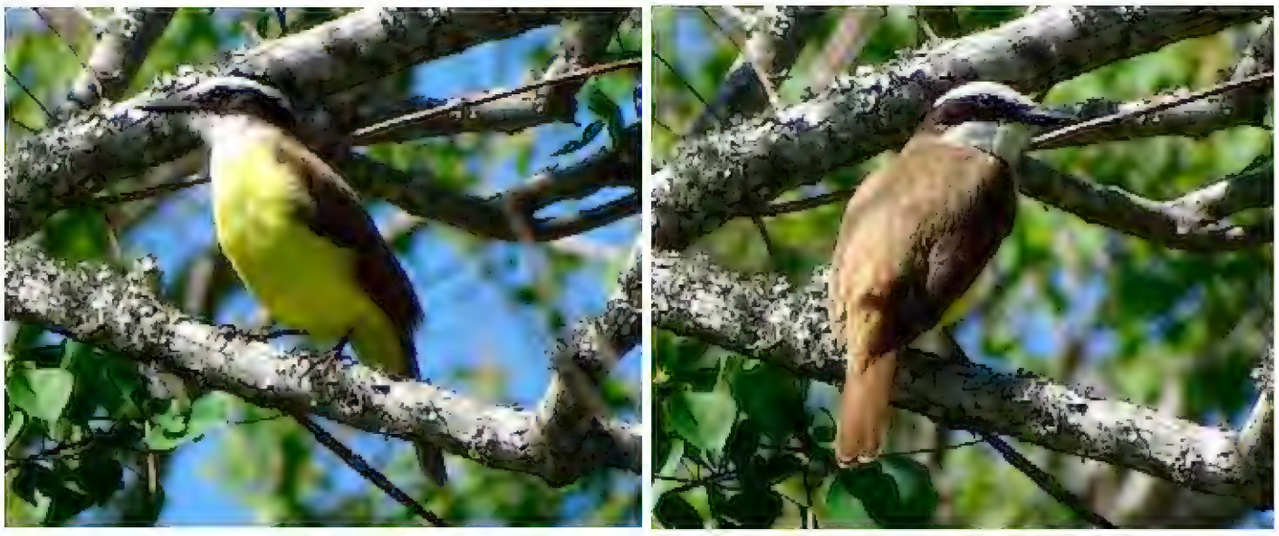
Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*). 2018-021. Accept (9-0). Bill Anderson submitted a written report of a Snail Kite that he photographed at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 4 April 2018. The bird was apparently a one-day wonder and was never relocated. This is the third record for South Carolina.

Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*). 2018-004. Accept (9-0). The State, a daily newspaper published in Columbia, SC, published an article about a Snowy Owl that was seen on 6 January 2018 in a Lake Murray neighborhood in Lexington County. The article included quotes from Julian Wilson, the person who saw and photographed the bird.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). 2018-033. Accept (9-0). Tammy Hester submitted a written report of a Burrowing Owl at Harbor Island (Beaufort Co.) on 30 July 2018. The bird was seen and photographed over the next 6 days.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*). 2018-036. Accept (9-0). Erin Szarek, Ed Blitch, Pam Ford, Craig Watson, John Cox, and Frank Lawkins submitted separate written reports of a Tropical Kingbird at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 12 October 2018. A very helpful audio clip was obtained which ruled out the nearly identical looking Couch's Kingbird. The bird was photographed by several people on the 12th but was never relocated after that. This report represents the first record of Tropical Kingbird in South Carolina.

Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*). 2018-014. Accept (9-0). The Committee voted on a series of documentary evidence provided on various eBird reports from John Cox, Irvin Pitts, Michael Robertson, David Youngblood, and Kathy Woolsey of Great Kiskadee at Bear Island Wildlife Management Area (Colleton Co.) from 31 December 2017 to 16 April 2018. Several photographs and audio were obtained from this bird which is presumably the same individual that wintered at Bear Island WMA in 2016-2017.



Great Kiskadee, 16 Apr 2018, Colleton Co, SC. Photo by David Youngblood

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2018-022. Accept (9-0). Kevin Kubach submitted a written report of a Say's Phoebe at Clemson/SCDNR Cherry Farm Complex (Pickens Co.) on 11 April 2018. Photographs provided by Linda Montgomery via eBird moved this species to the definitive list.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*). 2018-041. Accept (9-0). George McHenry submitted a written report of a Say's Phoebe at Clemson University's Simpson Research Station (Anderson Co.) on 6 December 2018. The bird was seen and photographed by many until early February 2019.

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*). 2018-046. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of a Cave Swallow at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 16 November 2018. Up to four individuals were reported on eBird after Ritch's initial sighting until early December.

Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*). 2018-013. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with photographs of a Sprague's Pipit that was seen on the Ocean Course Golf Course on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) from 18-19 October 2018.

Snow Bunting,
22 Dec 2018,
Horry Co, SC.
Photo by Irvin Pitts

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). 2018-042. Accept (9-0). Ritch Lilly submitted a written report of 2 Snow Buntings at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 19 December 2018. These birds were seen and photographed by many birders throughout the winter.

Bullock's Oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). 2018-016. Accept (9-0). Aaron Given submitted a written report along with photographs of a female Bullock's Oriole he captured and banded at a private residence in Mount Pleasant (Charleston Co.) on 9 February 2018. The bird was originally reported in late January and stayed through at least late March.

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*). 2018-027. Accept (8-1). The Committee voted on an eBird report from Matthew Tozer who photographed a Shiny Cowbird at Savannah National Wildlife Refuge (Jasper Co.) on 7 July 2018. The report was accepted with 8 votes to accept and 1 to not accept.

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*). 2018-032. Accept (8-1). Kevin Kubach submitted a written report of a Mourning Warbler that he observed at Fants Grove Wildlife Management Area (Anderson Co.) on 14 September 2018.

Mourning Warbler (*Geothlypis philadelphia*). 2018-035. Accept (9-0). Michael Gamble submitted a written report and photographs of a Mourning Warbler that was captured and banded on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 4 October 2018.

Kirtland's Warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*). 2018-034. Accept (9-0). Michael Gamble submitted a written report and photographs of a Kirtland's Warbler that was captured and banded on Kiawah Island (Charleston Co.) on 5 September 2018.

NON-ACCEPTED REPORTS

White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*). 2018-037. Non-accept (3-6). The Committee considered a written report of a White-tailed Tropicbird observed over the ocean near the Charleston/Georgetown County line on 12 October 2018. Some members noted that the detail presented in the report were plausible for a tropicbird but lack enough evidence to eliminate Red-billed Tropicbird.

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*). 2018-048. Non-accept (0-9). The Committee considered a written report of "heard-only" Black-capped Chickadee from the upstate (Greenville Co.). Committee members commented that distinguishing Black-capped Chickadee from Carolina Chickadee based on call notes was problematic given the wide range of vocalizations, and variation of those vocalizations of both species.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). 2018-030. Non-accept (4-5). The Committee considered a written report of 4 Savannah Sparrows observed on the beach at Huntington Beach State Park (Georgetown Co.) on 16 June 2018. Some members comment that the report lacked sufficient details to rule out more expected species.

UNRESOLVED REPORTS

The following reports received a majority of votes to accept but more than one vote to not accept. These reports will need to be reevaluated by the Committee.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). 2018-044. 6-3 vote.

Anna's x Calliope Hummingbird (*Calypte anna x Selaphorus calliope*). 2018-024. 6-3 vote.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). 2018-008. 7-2 vote.

Cassin's Vireo (*Vireo cassinii*). 2018-047. 5-4 vote

Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). 2018-031. 5-4 vote

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee thanks all the observers who submitted reports, and those who encouraged others to submit reports. Your actions increase our understanding of bird occurrence in South Carolina.

LITERATURE CITED

Given, A.G., G. Beaton, J. Click, L. Glover, S. Harvey, C. Hill, K. McCullough, W. Post, and S. Wagner. 2018. 82:75-81.

BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Spring 2019, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park, **WMA** – Wildlife Management Area, **WTP** – Water Treatment Plant

All italicized place names are counties.

Note on 2019 Spring Migration: Many birders commented on the atypical nature of this year's spring songbird migration, noting delayed arrivals of returning breeding species, lack of pass-through migrants, and low overall numbers.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: Sightings made outside of the SC coastal plain, increasing in recent years, included seven at Salem Lake *Forsyth* NC 14 Apr (John Haire, m. obs.), eight at Lake Conestee Nature Park *Greenville* SC 7 May (Mark Harvell), 15 at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 13 May (Harvey Clodfelter, m. obs.), and two at Biltmore Estate *Buncombe* NC 16-17 May (John Koon, m. obs.). Four photographed just beyond the surf in Corolla *Currituck* NC 31 May (David & Jonathan Longo) were unusual for the ocean.

Brant: 25 off Shell Point on Harkers Island *Carteret* NC 6 Mar (John Fussell, et al.) was a notable count for a site south of the Pamlico Sound.

Trumpeter Swan: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report of an immature Trumpeter Swan seen and photographed amongst Tundra Swans at Bear Island WMA *Colleton* SC 8-12 Mar (Irvin Pitts, Mac Williams, m. obs.). If accepted, this report would provide SC with its first definitive record of this large swan.

Immature swan reported as Trumpeter Swan 12 Mar 2019, Colleton Co, SC. Photo by David Youngblood

Tundra Swan: Individuals, or possibly the same individual, photographed at Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 26 May (Caleb Bronsink) and at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 26-27 May (Nathaniel Watkins) were quite late to be passing through.

Mottled Duck: Breeding may have occurred in southeast NC this spring, as a hen with three chicks was photographed at a country club lake in northeast Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 16 May (Sam Cooper). It is very possible that the chicks were hybrids, however, as the only drakes seen in the area were Mallards.

Green-winged Teal: Two, a drake and a hen, at McAlpine WTP *Mecklenburg* NC 23 May (Ron Clark, Greg Hays, Dennis Kent) were late.

Common Eider: A first-winter drake in Charleston Harbor around the Pitt St Causeway *Charleston* SC 4-19 May (m. obs.) and a hen in the Bogue Sound off Morehead City *Carteret* NC 19 May (Marty Wall, et al.) were late.

Surf Scoter: Five, two drakes and three hens, on Lake Julian *Buncombe* NC 22 Mar (Aaron Steed, m. obs.) was a great count for a site in the mountain region.

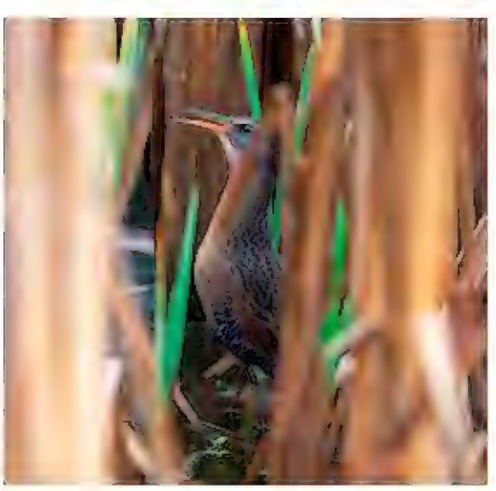
Black Scoter: 1437 in northbound flight off Oceanana Pier in Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 23 Mar (John Fussell, Martha Mayo) was a notable count.

Common Merganser: Breeding was confirmed at two sites in the NC mountains this spring—on the Tuckasegee River in *Jackson* NC where, after multiple sightings of two to five adults were made during the early spring, a hen was photographed with three chicks 20-22 May (Tom Quetchenbach), and on the Green River in *Polk* NC where a hen was photographed with six chicks 5 May (Vicky Burke) and again on adjacent Lake Adger, 20 May (Nora Murdock, Marilyn Westphal) and 27 May (Todd Arcos). Reports of breeding in the southern NC mountains have been regular since first documented in 2008.

White-winged Dove: Individuals were seen on Hilton Head Island *Beaufort* SC 31 Mar (Michael Smith, et al.), at a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 28-29 Apr (Deb Winter), and at a feeder in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 30 Apr (Wanda King).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Individuals on territory at the Dare County Bombing Range *Dare* NC 26 May (Merrill Lynch), along Tyne Rd at Mayo River SP *Rockingham* NC 28 May (Marty Wall), and at Singletary Lake SP *Bladen* NC 30 May (Wayne Hoffman) were good finds for those sites outside the mountains.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Ten distinct individuals continued from fall in a yard with feeders in Buxton *Dare* NC 20 Apr (Ann Maddock).



Virginia Rail, 8 Apr 2019, Rockingham Co, NC. Photo by Marty Wall

Virginia Rail: One in a wetland in Eden *Rockingham* NC 8-9 Apr (Marty Wall) was a first for that county.

Purple Gallinule: One at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 2 May (Emily Johnson, Nathaniel Watkins, et al.) was unusual for a site so far north.

Common Gallinule: One photographed along NC-8 in *Stokes* NC 12 May (Tony & Cara Woods) was a first for that county.

Limpkin: Sightings, increasing in our region the past two years, were made at four different sites towards the end of period. Individuals were photographed at Hidden Cypress Golf Club *Beaufort* SC 29 Apr (Cherry Underwood), at Mountain Island Lake *Mecklenburg* NC 21 May through 10 Jun (m. obs.), and in flight over Riverfront Park *Richland* SC 24 May (Tracy Martin). Two were seen, one photographed, in the Sparkleberry Swamp at the north end of Lake Marion *Sumter* SC 28 May (Elizabeth Anderegg, et al.). Is this recent increase in sightings due to food (snail) scarcity inside its normal range, or some other reason?

Sandhill Crane: One photographed in an urban area of Apex *Wake* NC 14 Apr (Nikki Miller) was likely forced down by inclement weather. Two photographed at David Pond *Lexington* SC 2 May (Bailey Parker) and three seen in flight over Lake James SP *McDowell* NC 6 May (Brian Bockhahn) were also unusual for those areas.

Whimbrel: 3000 in flight off Edisto Beach SP *Colleton* SC 17 Apr (Judy Walker) was an amazing count.

Long-billed Curlew: One seen over Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 28 Mar (Janet Thibault) may have been the same individual photographed at nearby Botany Bay Plantation WMA 5 Apr (Nicole-Marie Pettinelli).

Curlew Sandpiper: One seen and photographed on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 15 May (Alan MacEachren, m. obs.) was a great find. Sightings of this Eurasian species have been few and far between this past decade.

Sanderling: One photographed along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC after a period of heavy rain 19 Apr (Vicky Burke) was very unusual for the mountain region in spring.

Baird's Sandpiper: One seen in Mills River *Henderson* NC 16 May (Aaron Steed, Simon Thompson, et al.) was a great find for spring.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 30 along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 12 May (Timothy Carstens, m. obs.) was a remarkable count for an inland site.

Wilson's Phalarope: One seen at Lake Busbee in Conway *Horry* SC 15 May (Stephen Thomas) was, surprisingly, a first for that county.

Red-necked Phalarope: Two in a flooded field along Butler Bridge Rd in *Henderson* NC 19 Apr (Kevin Burke) and one at Lake Wheeler *Wake* NC 3 May (Marc Ribaudo) were great finds away from the ocean.

Red Phalarope: One seen and photographed on a small pond along Wyatt Ln in *Alamance* NC 13 Apr (David Pennebaker, m. obs.) was very unusual for an inland site, especially in spring.

South Polar Skua: Skuas were seen on ten of fourteen nearly consecutive pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 18 May through 2 Jun, with high counts of three skuas on 25 May and 26 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Long-tailed Jaeger: An adult well-seen over the beach just west of Cape Point *Dare* NC 24 May (Michael Gosselin) was an excellent sighting, as this species is the least likely jaeger to be seen from shore in the Carolinas.

Glaucous Gull: First/second-year birds seen at three sites in *Dare* NC—at Pea Island NWR 18 Mar (W. Douglas Robinson), over the Roanoke Sound 9 Apr (Jeff Lewis), and near the Oregon Inlet Campground 19 Apr (Paul Doshkov)—may have been the same individual that was seen around Pea Island NWR during the winter.

Great Black-backed Gull: An immature bird photographed at Carolina Marina on Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 13 May (Marty Wall) was a first for that county.

Great Black-backed Gull
13 May 2019, Rockingham Co, NC.
Photo by Marty Wall

Sooty Tern: One seen in a tern nesting colony on Deveaux Bank *Charleston* SC 15 May (Brad Wilkinson, et al.) was suggestive of attempted breeding there.

Least Tern: Audubon NC Coastal Biologist Lindsay Addison estimates that there were 2400 adult Least Terns in a nesting colony at the north end of Lea-Hutaff Island *Pender* NC this spring. This count is the highest made in NC since tri-annual surveys began in 1977, and possibly in modern times, which is encouraging news for a threatened species.

Roseate Tern: Individuals were photographed inside the bird protection area at Cape Point *Dare* NC 17 May (Michael Gosselin) and in flight northbound off Oceanana Pier in Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 22 May (Marty Wall).

Sandwich Tern: One seen on the beach in Atlantic Beach *Carteret* NC 16 Mar (Martha Mayo) was somewhat early to return.

White-tailed Tropicbird: An adult was photographed approximately 83 miles south-southeast of Cape Lookout *Carteret* NC 31 May (Hannes Leonard).

Red-throated Loon: Individuals on Lake Townsend *Guilford* NC 10-12 Mar (Matt Wangerin, m. obs.) and on Lake Hartwell *Anderson* SC 1 Apr (Steve Patterson) were notable for inland sites.

European Storm-Petrel: One was briefly seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 1 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Trindade Petrel: This rare gadfly was seen on four pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this spring, with one intermediate-morph and one dark-morph 23 May, one light-morph 24 May, one dark-morph 25 May, and one dark-morph 29 May (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Bermuda Petrel: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 8 May, 9 May, and 29 May (Brian Patteson, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: Individuals were seen on three pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC this spring, on 22 May, 2 Jun, and 8 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Sooty Shearwater: 19 in northbound flight off Jeannette's Pier *Dare* NC 22 May (Jelmer Poelstra, et al.) was a notable count from shore.

Magnificent Frigatebird: An immature bird was seen soaring over a golf course in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 27 May (Andrew Kratter).

Masked Booby: Individuals, sub-adults or near adults, were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC on 23 May, 1 Jun, and 8 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Brown Booby: An adult female was photographed on the beach just north of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC 18 Mar (Paul Doshkov).

Great Cormorant: Three adults in Beaufort Inlet *Carteret* NC 5 Mar (John Fussell, et al.) was a good count for that site.

Anhinga: Individuals seen soaring with vultures near Pilot Mountain SP *Stokes* NC 23 Apr (Jesse Anderson) and in flight over Little Beaverdam Creek in *Anderson* SC 27 Apr (Andy Norris, Steve Patterson) were unusual for sites so far inland, likely migrants that overshot their summering grounds. 21 at North River Preserve Carteret NC 5 May (John Fussell, Jack Fennell) was a record count for that county.

American White Pelican: The high count below the dam on High Rock Lake *Davidson* and *Rowan* NC this spring was 72 on 7 Mar (David & Susan Disher, Marbry Hopkins). Nine on Falls Lake in *Durham* NC 13-14 Mar (Ed Corey, m. obs.) and 17 on Jordan Lake *Chatham* NC 24 Mar (Jelmer Poelstra) were good counts for those sites. Six in flight over the Yadkin River in Siloam *Yadkin* NC 2 May (Brian Bockhahn) were a first for that county. 720 at Canal WMA *Berkeley* SC 16 Mar (Brad Sale) was an impressive count.

Least Bittern: One seen in the tall grass around the pond at Valle Crucis Community Park *Watauga* NC 19 May (Bruce Young, et al.) was a first for that county or for any site in the mountains north of Mount Mitchell.

Cattle Egret: An estimated 1200 inside a large heronry at a former quarry in west-central *Marlboro* SC 19 May (Mac Williams, et al.) was an amazing total.

White Ibis: 1460 counted flying towards an island roost south of Harkers Island *Carteret* NC during the evening of 18 May (Trevor Sleight) was a good count for NC, indicative of the species' growing numbers in the state. Still more numerous in SC, 5000 White

Ibises were counted going to roost in a swamp near Ruffin *Colleton* SC 24 Mar (Sidney Gauthreaux, et al.).

Swallow-tailed Kite: A pair photographed building a nest in a Tulip Poplar tree in *Onslow* NC 29 Apr (Hunter Phillips) provided the third documented report of nesting in the state. One photographed in flight over Gunter Rd *Greenville* SC 7 May (Joan Baker, Denise DuPon) was unusual for upstate SC in spring.

Gray Kingbird: One was seen and photographed on a powerline in Edisto Beach *Colleton* SC 12 May (Pam Ford, Craig Watson, et al.) but not thereafter.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: One seen along Middleton Loop Rd in southeast *Stokes* NC 15-16 Apr (Jesse Anderson, m. obs.) was a first for that county. A pair nested in a maple tree near the Rock Hill-York County Airport *York* SC 25 Apr into summer (Andy Lazenby, m. obs.). One was seen along Mid-Pines Rd in *Wake* NC 23 May (Alan Avakian) but not thereafter.

Philadelphia Vireo: One seen and recorded singing in north *Watauga* NC 1 May (Merrill Lynch) was a great find for spring.

Barn Swallow: One seen in flight off Shell Point on Harkers Island *Carteret* NC 6 Mar (John Fussell, et al.) was early.

American Pipit: One photographed at Archie Elledge WTP *Forsyth* NC 17 May (John Haire) was somewhat late.

Evening Grosbeak: Likely migrating back north after the mini-irruption this winter were two to three photographed at a feeder in Black Mountain *Buncombe* NC 25-28 Apr (Jay Wherley) and two photographed at a feeder in Wake Forest *Wake* NC in early May (Mark Joyner).

Red Crossbill: Two at Pilot Mountain SP *Surry* NC 26 Mar (Jesse Anderson) were unusual for the Foothills region outside of an irruption year.

Pine Siskin: This finch may have bred in *Orange* NC this spring, as an adult was seen feeding a juvenile in a yard in Chapel Hill 13 May (Dave Hart).

Lark Sparrow: Individuals continued from winter in *Camden* NC through 11 Apr (James Harrison) and at Myrtle Beach SP *Horry* SC through 22 Apr (Scott Hartley).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Individuals near the Moore County Airport *Moore* NC 9 Apr (Susan Campbell) and at Price Park *Guilford* NC 23 Apr (Andrew Thornton, m. obs.) were unusual for those areas, and for spring.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Individuals were photographed with grackles under a feeder in Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 16 Mar (Jordan Matejceck), with a flock of cowbirds near Summerton *Clarendon* SC 5 Apr (Rebecca Jordan), and at a feeder in Leland *Brunswick* NC 12 Apr (Diane Preble).

Brewer's Blackbird: This species was seen at Dobbins Farm in Townville *Anderson* SC throughout March with a high count of 35 there 23 Mar (Linda Montgomery, et al.). Up to three were seen along Hooper Ln in *Henderson* NC 24 Mar to 3 Apr (Wayne Forsythe, m. obs.).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Two singing males at creeks along NC-171 in Jamesville *Martin* NC 30 Apr with one continuing 2 May (Jeff Lewis) were unusual for that area of the coastal plain.

Brewster's Warbler (hybrid): A singing male was on territory in southwest *Macon* NC 30 Apr through 4 Jun (Samuel Merker, m. obs.).

Connecticut Warbler: A definite migratory movement through our southern mountains took place 12-13 May, with individual migrants photographed at Table Rock SP *Pickens* SC 12 May (Jerry & Brenda Callaway), seen and heard singing along the Oconaluftee River in *Swain* NC 13 May (Angus Pritchard, et al.), and heard singing in the Hospital Fields in Brevard *Transylvania* NC 13-15 May (Michael Plauché, et al.). One recorded singing just northwest of Weaverville *Buncombe* NC 29 May (Steve Semanchuk) was also rather late.

Hooded Warbler: One seen and recorded singing along the French Broad River near Brevard *Transylvania* NC 14 Mar (Nathaniel Axtell, et al.) was quite early.

Cerulean Warbler: Ten singing males along a ten mile stretch of the Roanoke River in *Bertie* NC 8 May (John Carpenter, Alexander Worm) was a notable count of that disjunct breeding population.

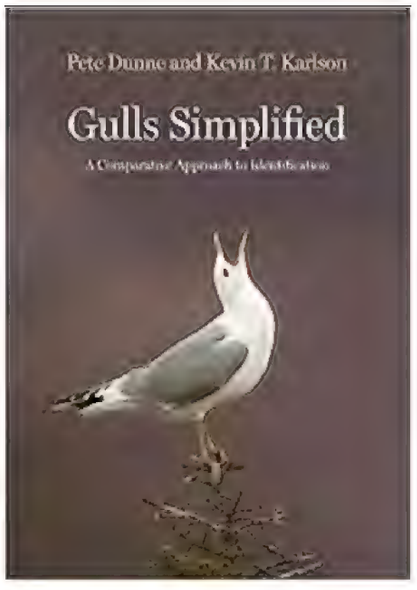
Western Tanager: Individual males were photographed in yards in Trent Woods *Craven* NC 20-29 Mar (Lee Rouse) and in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 17 Apr (Jim Gould).

Indigo Bunting: A first-winter male that visited a feeder in Straits *Carteret* NC 17-20 Mar (Carolyn & Don Hoss) was early to arrive.

Dickcissel: Dickcissels began showing up at traditional breeding/summering sites in late April and early May, with one in the Bluff Unit of Santee NWR *Clarendon* SC 24 Apr (Julie Mobley, et al.) being the earliest. Numbers peaked at many sites by mid-to-late May, with eight at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC 27 May (Charlie Quattlebaum) and six at North River Preserve *Carteret* NC 1 Jun (Ronnie Hewlette, et al.) being the high counts.

Birders' Book Review
Gulls Simplified:
A Comparative Approach to Identification

Steve Shultz



Two words not often placed in conjunction with one another. "Gulls", perhaps one of the most confounding groups of birds from an identification perspective, and "simplified", a term not usually associated with the former.

Merriam-Webster defines gulls as "*any of numerous long-winged web-footed aquatic birds (subfamily Larinae of the family Laridae)... usually gray and white bird (especially of the genus Larus) differing from a tern in usually larger size, stouter build, thicker somewhat hooked bill, less pointed wings, and short unforked tail.*" An alternative definition is "*to take advantage of (one who is foolish or unwary) : Deceive*". And deceive they often do. With hybrids, close relationships between species, and broad clinal variation across individual species, gull identification can be anything but easy. Note various synonyms of the second definition (bamboozle, beguile, bluff, buffalo, burn, catch, con, cozen, deceive, delude, dupe, fake out, fool, gaff, gammon), and one can more or less tell that birders find gulls to be one of the harder aspects of identification.

So can gulls be simplified, as Dunne and Karlson suggest? They make a valiant attempt. Breaking down our "seagulls" (you knew I could not resist) into four groups of small, medium (gray-backed), large (dark-backed) and "dark horse", the authors approach gull identification from the perspective of comparison, versus absolute or diagnostic field marks, which, while commonly used in other families of birds, are less common in gulls. And since a picture is reputed to have the value of many words, most species accounts provide copious numbers of photographs to illustrate key points. For example, the Laughing Gull chapter includes no less than 31 photos of a species that is not, for the most part, as great a challenge as some others.

I especially like the use of photographs with multiple species shown together, as this helps drive the point of comparison home, and very much enjoyed testing my skills via the 35 quiz photos comprising the books last chapter.

The authors introduce gull identification and challenges by discussing several factors including: a human desire to specifically catalog or identify each individual, which may not always be possible with gulls, at least visually; the complex molt strategy of gulls, which produces many expressions of a single species; the propensity of gulls to interbreed within the macro groups noted above; and the human (birder) behavior of finding additional "value" in rare or out of range birds, thus creating situations where

birders are sorting through more common species with the specific intent of finding a rarity.

The authors suggest simplifying our *approach* to gulls, using geography and probability as a useful tool, not something to fight against, and focusing on learning (and learning well) the common, local species and variation within, so that when a genuine rarity appears, it will stand out all the more due to the observers deeper knowledge and understanding of size, structure and general impression, versus "that mirror on P8".

And this, I feel, is the key takeaway from the work. Will it provide "six new surefire markings to note when differentiating Ring-billed and California Gulls"? No. But will the reader be encouraged to better understand what makes a California Gull a California Gull by deepening the understanding of structure and appearance? If the answer is "yes", then the book has done its job. And the way that the job is done is to try and de-mystify the dark voodoo that often comes into discussion about gull identification. By increasing the observers confidence that they can have a reasonable expectation of correctly identifying the vast majority of the gulls encountered, the authors bestow upon the reader the ability to not be intimidated, and thus, in this roundabout way, succeed at making gulls (somewhat more) simplified.

When I started this review, the intent was to define how another entry into an already crowded field of book promising easier identification was not especially required by the target audience, but after more careful attention and time with the book, I find it my first choice when trying to age a particular bird, or brush up on what to look for when I'm hoping to find a Franklin's among the Laughing.

Returning to our friends at Merriam-Webster, the word simplify is defined as: *"a: to reduce to basic essentials; b: to diminish in scope or complexity; c: to make more intelligible."* While basic essentials may be met by the traditional Peterson's or Sibley guide, and where it might not be possible to diminish the complexity of something as diverse as gull plumage and variation, I feel the authors very much succeed at the attempt to make gull identification more intelligible.

Did You Know?

30 years of past issues of *The Chat* are available online (of which the two most recent years are available to CBC members only). They can be accessed via their Tables of Contents; or their Cumulative Index. Also, Briefs for the Files and Bird Records Committee reports can be searched in an online database.

For more information on *The Chat*, including accessing the search tools noted above, please visit: https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/chat/

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- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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Cover: Cedar Waxwings, 9 August 2019, Jackson County, NC
Photo by Jeff Gresko

2017 Spring Bird Counts in South Carolina

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Seven spring migration counts were conducted in South Carolina from April 24 to May 21, 2017. The 158 regular participants and feeder watchers reported 193 species, down from the 216 species reported last year and the high of 223 in 2014 and 2015. Overall 22 species of warblers were reported, down from the count high of 30 reported in 2015.

Additional highlights for each of the counts are provided by the count compilers below.

Compilers' Comments

Greenville County: May 6, 2017; 109 species; 3513 individuals

Coordinator: Paul Serridge
4 Audrey Lane
Greenville, SC 29615

Participants: Derek Aldrich, Joan Baker, Shelby Birch, Andrew Bowers, David Boyd, Candice Burns, Lynn Burns, Joplin Chittenden, Donnie Coody, Don Cox, Steve Cox, Vicki Cox, Denise Dupon, Don Faulkner, Becky Gibson, Gene Hall, Joyce Hall, Pam Helton, Sarah Hierholzer, J.B. Hines, Rob Hunnings, Jerry Johnson, Jo Anne Keasler, Jennifer Kindel, David Kirk, Len Kopka, Jane Kramer, Tim Lee, Carol Lyles, Michael Oliver, Merikay Pirrone, Hilda Reese, Michael Robertson, Roberto Rodriguez, Lulu Sandoval, Paul Serridge

Spartanburg County: May 13, 2017; 119 species; 3958 individuals

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell
126 Greengate Lane
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Doug Allen, Carol Anderson, Tom Broome, Tim Brown, Dan Bryant, Sarah Caldwell, David Campbell, Lyle Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Timothy Campbell, Cheryl Cooksey, Sharon Donovan, Frank Hull, Rebecca Jones, Jeanette Keepers, John Kimbrell, Joe Mitchell, Roberta Mitchell, Nora Moore, Terry Moore, Ingrid Norris, Mary Ann Myers, William Myers, Robert Powell, Eva Pratt, Sam Pratt, Doug Rayner, Mack Shealey, Lenette Sprouse, Michael Sprouse, Kristen Taylor, Gerald Thurmond, Kay Whilden, Lanita Wilson, Dan Wooton, Nancy Wooton

The Spartanburg 2017 Spring Count found a respectable count of 119 species. Our warbler count was 19 species. Best birds were an Olive-sided Flycatcher (new county record), a pair of Mississippi Kites, a Blackpoll Warbler, three Bald Eagles, a Northern Harrier, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch. Whippoorwills and Chuck-wills-widows were hard to come by, but included in our nocturnal count are 132 Chimney Swifts that descended into a chimney at dusk. We had a reduced number of counters, field and feeder, and were not able to run a boat survey of the lake, all of which reduced our expected numbers. We were pleased to welcome five first-time participants.

Cherokee County: May 20, 2017; 77 species; 1154 individuals

Coordinator: Lyle Campbell
126 Greengate Lane
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Participants: Carol Anderson, David Campbell, Lyle Campbell, Sarah Campbell, Timothy Campbell, Randy Fowler, J. B. Hines, Robert Jones, Karla Lavender

The Cherokee 2017 Spring Count found a respectable count of 77 species. Our warbler count was 9 species. Best bird was a Horned Lark.

Aiken County: May 6, 2017; 121 species; 3883 individuals

Coordinator: Paul Koehler
4542 Silver Bluff Rd.
Jackson, SC 29831

Participants: Carol Eldridge, Larry Eldridge, Sara Green, Paul Koehler, Willie Malpass, Eric Monaco, Megan Oberkircher, Mary Pallon, Steve Patterson, Lois Stacey, Peter Stangel, Mark Vukovich, Alice Walker, Doug Walker, Calvin Zippler, plus 16 Pro-Birder students with Steve and Sara

Congaree National Park: May 7, 2017; 75 species; 1004 individuals

Coordinator: John Grego

Participants: David Crosson, Caroline Eastman, Carol Gist, John Grego, Jerry Griggs, Kathleen O'Grady, Miriam Oudejans, Brian Pasco, Vikki Pasco, Jean Prothro, Clover Robichaud, Claire Schuetrum, David Schuetrum, Bill Stanley, Warren Steckle, Alice Steinke, Holly Whitsett and 7 other Robin Carter Dawn Chorus Walk attendees.

A Spring North American Migration Count (NAMC) was held May 7, 2017 at Congaree National Park. Weather was 48 degrees Fahrenheit in the morning and 72 degrees Fahrenheit in the afternoon with light winds and clear skies. Jerry Griggs led a group of 12 participants on the Robin Carter Dawn Chorus Walk in the morning, while three separate groups covered the Western Boundary, the Bluff Trail and the Sims Trail through the early afternoon. Another party covered a portion of the US 601 corridor in the late afternoon, and an informal report from a boat party on the Congaree River added

some species to the count. With a bit more coverage than usual, we observed 17 warbler species along with some other interesting migrants and residents. We hoped to hear migrating thrushes, but the only thrushes seen or heard on the day were resident Wood Thrushes. A total of 75 species was detected.

Charleston/Berkeley Counties: May 7, 2017; 148 species; 7426 individuals

Coordinator: Andy Harrison
35 Cross Creek Drive, Apt P-7
Charleston, SC 29412

Participants: Ed Blitch, Laura Courtney, Hal S. Currey, Chris Davies, Connie Drew, Judy Fairchild, Pam Ford, Dennis Forsythe, Aaron Given, Andy Harrison, Margaret Harrison, Finn Hayes, Patrick Hayes, Richard Hayes, E. Starr Hazard III, Matt Johnson, Don Jones, Pete Laurie, Mary-Catherine Martin, Caitlin McDaniel, David McLean Jr., Carl Miller, Cathy Miller, Felicia Sanders, Peggy Schachte, Chris Snook, Ray Swagerty, Ann Truesdale, Jennifer Tyrrell, Craig Watson, Lori Sheridan Wilson, Bill Woolsey, Kathy Woolsey

The 2017 Charleston Spring Bird Count was held on May 7, 2017. There were 33 participants divided into 20 parties that tallied 81.86 hours in the field. We observed 148 total species and 7426 individuals for a bird/party hour average of 90.7.

Once again the weather favored us with mostly clear skies and no precipitation on the day of the count. Temperatures ranged from a low at dawn of about 55 degrees Fahrenheit to an afternoon high of about 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Our species and individual totals were down this year, falling well below the 11-year averages of 153 and 9562, respectively. We fielded parties in 11 areas (Fairlawn Plantation and the airport area were not covered). Hal Currey and his intrepid party of birders included coverage of both Capers Island and a portion of the Intracoastal Waterway. A combination of factors undoubtedly contributed to the lower totals including unseasonably warm winter, an "early spring", a later count date than usual, and fewer participants than in recent years. Despite this, we still recorded some great birds including one species new to the count, Dickcissel, observed by Aaron Given and Lori Sheridan Wilson on Dewees Island.

There were fewer lingering winter species observed on this count than in the past few years. For example, although small numbers of Black Scoters were still being reported to eBird from places like Breach Inlet and Fort Moultrie in late May, none were recorded in the count circle on May 7. Likewise, there were no observations of Common Loon or Blue-winged Teal, and only single individuals of Red-breasted Merganser (Hal Currey and the ICWW party) and Horned Grebe (Felicia Sanders and Mary-Catherine Martin in the North Bulls Island area).

Although our observed numbers of wading birds were generally comparable to their long-term averages, we fared poorly among many shorebird and seabird species. For example, among the shorebirds, we recorded only 72 Black-bellied Plovers (11-year average 148.1), 20 Greater Yellowlegs (42.8), three Lesser Yellowlegs (56.7), 42 Willets (91.8), 42 Spotted Sandpipers (86.6), 24 Ruddy Turnstones (54), one Red Knot (155.3), 15 Sanderlings (75.1), five Semipalmated Sandpipers (88.6), four Western Sandpipers (35.2), six Least Sandpipers (56.5), 86 Dunlin (424.9), and 85 Short-billed Dowitchers

(339.9). On the plus side, we recorded 320 Whimbrel (170.9) and a single Stilt Sandpiper (observed by the North Bulls Island party, the first for the count since 2007). Among seabirds, we observed only one Ring-billed Gull (17), one Herring Gull (14.9), 35 Royal Terns (223.8), nine Sandwich Terns (59.6), no Common Terns (6.6), and 34 Forster's Terns (131.9). We noted 43 Gull-billed Terns (20.7), 149 Least Terns (42.3), and 816 Black Skimmers (357.9).

We did reasonably well with raptors and nightjars including observations of 95 Black Vultures (42.7), 14 Bald Eagles (8), three Cooper's Hawks (1.4), eight Common Nighthawks (1.8), and 26 Chuck-will's-widows (13.9). One exception was Red-tailed Hawk, for which we only recorded four individuals (8.5). Our woodpecker numbers were also comparable in most cases to their long-term averages. We recorded five Red-headed Woodpeckers (6.3), 23 Downy Woodpeckers (10.5), and 10 Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (7.4). Although in some cases individual numbers were slightly down, we reported 17 species of warblers, including two Yellow Warblers (0.6), three American Redstarts (0.6), six Worm-eating Warblers (2.1), and five Ovenbirds (0.5). However, except for eight American Robins (1.5) and 59 Eastern Bluebirds (45.8), we failed to observe any thrushes this year. Once again our swallow numbers were low relative to those in recent years, and we also fared poorly with blackbirds. We only recorded 244 Red-winged Blackbirds (410.7), 90 Boat-tailed Grackles (144.6), and 54 Common Grackles (91.8).

We did record several well-documented rarities this year. One was the previously mentioned Dickcissel (observed for several minutes on Dewees Island, with good details provided by Aaron Given), and another was a pair of Nelson's Sparrows observed and photographed by Carl and Cathy Miller, also on Dewees. To my knowledge, the Dickcissel was the first ever reported on a Charleston Spring Count. The only previous record of Nelson's Sparrows occurred in 2012 when two birds were observed by Craig Watson and his party in the Porcher's Bluff area. In the North Bulls Island area, Felicia Sanders and Mary-Catherine Martin provided good details for their observations of both Stilt Sandpiper and a lone Reddish Egret. Although Reddish Egrets have become fairly regular visitors to Bulls Island in the spring, the only previous observation of Stilt Sandpiper on a Spring Count occurred in 2007, when Felicia and her North Bulls party reported two birds there.

Some of the area highlights on this year's count included:

In the North Bulls area, Felicia Sanders and Mary-Catherine Martin observed one Pied-billed Grebe, one Horned Grebe, five Least Bitterns, one Reddish Egret, one White Ibis, three Glossy Ibis, 13 Mottled Ducks, two Killdeer, 12 Black-necked Stilts, 3 Solitary Sandpipers, 2 Marbled Godwits, one Stilt Sandpiper, 76 Least Terns, 300 Black Skimmers, four Common Nighthawks, one Marsh Wren, one Black-and-white Warbler, and five Bobolinks.

In the South Bulls area, David McLean and Starr Hazard reported four Least Bitterns, three White Ibis, six Glossy Ibis, two Black-necked Stilt, one Herring Gull, two Common Nighthawks and four Bobolink.

Hal Currey and his Capers Island party (Chris Davies, Richard Hayes and Peggy Schachte) observed two Northern Gannets, five Bald Eagles, 15 Ruddy Turnstones, three Sanderlings, 490 Black Skimmers, one Great Horned Owl, and one American Redstart.

In the Laurel Hill area, Kathy Woolsey and her party (Laura Courtney and Bill Woolsey) recorded two Red-tailed Hawks, one Solitary Sandpiper, two Northern Flickers, eight American Robins, and one House Sparrow.

Andy Harrison and his party in Cainhoy (Margaret Harrison and Ann Truesdale) observed one Swallow-tailed Kite, one Ring-billed Gull, one Rock Pigeon, two Red-headed Woodpeckers, seven Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, one Northern Flicker, six Eastern Wood-Pewees, four Worm-eating Warblers, one Ovenbird, one Kentucky Warbler, one Yellow-breasted Chat, and three Bachman's Sparrows.

In the Sewee Road area, Jen Tyrrell and Matt Johnson reported 16 Cattle Egrets, 30 Black-crowned Night Herons, two Wood Storks, three Killdeer, one Semipalmated Sandpiper, three Cedar Waxwings, two Yellow Warblers, two Yellow-rumped Warblers, three Yellow-breasted Chats, and four Bobolinks. In pre-dawn owling, Dennis Forsythe added one Eastern Screech-Owl, one Great Horned Owl, six Barred Owls, and 23 Chuck-wills-widows (and augmented the totals for various other species).

Perry Nugent was unable to lead the Ion Swamp area because of health reasons, and Ed Blitch volunteered to fill in for him this year. Ed and Ray Swagerty observed 12 Wild Turkeys, three Red-headed Woodpeckers, three Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, 4 Eastern Wood-Pewees, six Prairie Warblers, 22 Prothonotary Warblers, two Worm-eating Warblers, one Swainson's Warbler, four Ovenbirds, and 20 Hooded Warblers. They also added three Barred Owls (and a fourth bird later during daylight hours) and one Chuck-wills-widow during pre-dawn owling.

Focusing on the Sewee Preserve portion of the Porcher's Bluff area, Craig Watson and Pam Ford recorded one Wood Stork, five Mississippi Kites, one Cooper's Hawk, five Wild Turkeys, 75 Whimbrel, one Sandwich Tern, five Chimney Swifts, two Tree Swallows, 11 Northern Rough-winged Swallows, four Brown Thrashers, and one Black-and-white Warbler. Dennis Forsythe performed an early morning stationary count at the Copahee Sound boat landing, and he added two Canada Geese, three Clapper Rails, two Greater Yellowlegs, and 10 Boat-tailed Grackles (and also augmented the totals of many other species, including 170 additional Whimbrel).

Don Jones and his party (Finn Hayes and Patrick Hayes) covered the Guerin's Bridge Road area, and they observed five Wood Ducks, one Cooper's Hawk, one Clapper Rail, four Cedar Waxwings, two Loggerhead Shrikes (once again Don and his party were the only ones to observe this species), and two American Goldfinches.

Cathy Miller and her group (Connie Drew, Judy Fairchild, Aaron Given, Pete Laurie, Caitlin McDaniel, Carl Miller, Chris Snook, and Lori Sheridan Wilson) on Dewees Island finished with 88 species this year, an excellent total! They observed two Mottled Ducks, five Osprey, four Bald Eagles, one Cooper's Hawk, three Clapper Rails, 24 Wilson's Plovers, 720 Semipalmated Plovers, two Black-necked Stilts, six Greater Yellowlegs, two Lesser Yellowlegs, one Red Knot, 12 Sanderlings, four Semipalmated Sandpipers, four Least Sandpipers, 35 Gull-billed Terns, one Caspian Tern, 33 Royal Terns, three Common Ground-Doves, two Eastern Screech-Owls, two Common Nighthawks, one Belted Kingfisher, two Marsh Wrens, three Gray Catbirds, one Black-throated Blue Warbler, one American Redstart, 28 Painted Buntings, one Dickcissel, two Nelson's

Sparrows, and 9 House Finches. In pre-dawn owling, Judy Fairchild, Connie Drew and Caitlin McDaniel added two Chuck-wills-widows (and augmented the totals of some other species).

Finally, Monty Wallace was not available to cover the Intracoastal Waterway on the day of the count. However, Hal Currey and his Capers Island party volunteered to split their time between Capers and the ICWW, and so thanks to their efforts we had at least partial coverage of the Waterway this year. They reported one Red-breasted Merganser, 300 Semipalmated Plovers, 45 American Oystercatchers, 44 Whimbrel, four Western Sandpipers, 43 Dunlin, two Caspian Terns, and eight Sandwich Terns.

Notable misses this year included: Common Loon, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Black Scoter, Northern Bobwhite, King Rail, Sora, American Coot, Piping Plover, Common Tern, Yellow-throated Vireo, Chipping Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow.

I am grateful to all of the participants on this year's Spring Count, especially my area leaders, and also to those who have contributed to our Birdathon. A total of $449 has been donated or pledged so far, with contributions/pledges coming from: Ed Blitch, Hollace and Jim Boswell, Bob and Monica Bradley, George Cromartie, Hal Currey, Pam Ford, Margaret Harrison, and Ann Truesdale. The funds we raise will be used to support our ongoing projects at the McAlhany Nature Preserve and other chapter activities.

As always, I enjoyed serving as compiler for the count and look forward to doing it again next year!

Jasper County: May 13, 2017; 93 species; 1031 individuals

Coordinator: Steve Wagner
313 E. 54th St.
Savannah, GA 31405

Participants: Larry Carlile, Rose Talbot, Steve Wagner

Three participants in two parties contributed to Jasper County's Spring Migration Count on May 13. Larry Carlile and Rose Talbot covered the Savannah National Wildlife Refuge. Steve Wagner birded north along the Savannah River to Tillman and to the Nimmer sod farm near Ridgeland. Unfortunately, we were unable to cover the dredge spoil disposal area this year. We were also hampered by intermittent rain all morning followed by steady, heavy rain in the afternoon. These factors contributed to our significantly lower species count compared to the high of 143 in 2015.

Table 1. Spring 2017 bird counts in South Carolina

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck							7	7
Canada Goose	124	293	18	60		23	10	528
Wood Duck	32	1		19	2	15	9	78
Mallard	46	75		30		10		161
Mottled Duck						15		15
Red-breasted Merganser						1		1
Northern Bobwhite	5	12		14				31

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Wild Turkey	13	5	17	13		17	5	70
Pied-billed Grebe	2	2				1		5
Horned Grebe						1		1
Rock Pigeon	1	46	34	1		1		83
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	8		2				11
Common Ground Dove						3		3
Mourning Dove	83	216	49	92	8	55	34	537
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5	7	8	26	16	30	7	99
Common Nighthawk		9		5		8	1	23
Chuck-will's-widow	3	7	5	13		26	2	56
Eastern Whip-poor-will		3	3	1				7
Chimney Swift	79	217	34	43	20	12	3	408
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	15	33		9	4	4		65
Clapper Rail						7		7
King Rail							4	4
Purple Gallinule							10	10
Common Gallinule						27	20	47
Black-necked Stilt						16	2	18
American Oystercatcher						53		53
Black-bellied Plover						72		72
Killdeer	17	19	13	6		5	9	69
Semipalmated Plover						1107		1107
Wilson's Plover						25		25
Whimbrel						320		320
Marbled Godwit						2		2
Ruddy Turnstone						24		24
Red Knot						1		1
Stilt Sandpiper						1		1
Sanderling						15		15
Dunlin						86		86
Least Sandpiper				25		6	5	36
Semipalmated Sandpiper				2		5		7
Western Sandpiper						4		4
Short-billed Dowitcher						85		85
dowitcher sp.						2		2
Wilson's Snipe		1						1
Spotted Sandpiper	6	1	2	12		42	5	68
Solitary Sandpiper	5	4		4	2	4		19
Lesser Yellowlegs				3		3		6
Willet						42		42
Greater Yellowlegs						20		20
Laughing Gull						416		416
Ring-billed Gull						1		1
Herring Gull						1		1
Least Tern						149	5	154
Gull-billed Tern						43		43
Caspian Tern						3		3
Forster's Tern						34		34
Royal Tern						35		35
Sandwich Tern						9		9
Black Skimmer						816		816
Wood Stork				1		3	14	18
Northern Gannet						2		2
Double-crested Cormorant		13			5	64	1	83
Anhinga				10	6	51	17	84
Brown Pelican						176		176
Least Bittern						11	2	13
Great Blue Heron	16	25	8	15	11	24	1	100

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Great Egret	1			9	3	189	56	258
Snowy Egret					1	150	11	162
Little Blue Heron				12	1	59	10	82
Tricolored Heron				1		73	1	75
Reddish Egret						1		1
Cattle Egret				312		23	38	373
Green Heron	6	4		2	3	43	10	68
Black-crowned Night-Heron						38		38
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron							1	1
night-heron sp.						1		1
White Ibis					36	4	1	41
Glossy Ibis				1		9		10
Roseate Spoonbill							1	1
Black Vulture	11	24	15	92	8	95	16	261
Turkey Vulture	65	28	21	84	17	92	1	308
Osprey	1	4	8	4	4	22	2	45
Swallow-tailed Kite				3		1	4	8
Northern Harrier		1						1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	4						5
Cooper's Hawk	3					3		6
Bald Eagle		3		3	2	14		22
Mississippi Kite		2		33	12	18		65
Red-shouldered Hawk	11	14	3	24	9	17	1	79
Broad-winged Hawk		1		2				3
Red-tailed Hawk	17	14	6	10		4		51
buteo sp.						2		2
Eastern Screech-Owl	1			2		4		7
Great Horned Owl	2	1		1		2		6
Barred Owl		10		2	18	10		40
Belted Kingfisher	5	13	1	7	4	1	1	32
Red-headed Woodpecker	2	8	2	26	3	5	1	47
Red-bellied Woodpecker	56	40	15	65	19	67	14	276
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		2						2
Downy Woodpecker	16	26	4	16	16	23	2	103
Red-cockaded Woodpecker				4		10		14
Hairy Woodpecker		2						2
Northern Flicker	5	4		8		3		20
Pileated Woodpecker	26	10	4	21	15	11	6	93
American Kestrel		1		1				2
Great Crested Flycatcher	18	19	8	112	23	144	12	336
Eastern Kingbird	41	16	1	76		39	7	180
Olive-sided Flycatcher		1						1
Eastern Wood-Pewee	2	18	13	53	8	10	6	110
Acadian Flycatcher	19	9	5	12	28	6		79
Eastern Phoebe	39	33	5	10			1	88
Loggerhead Shrike	1			1		2		4
White-eyed Vireo	27	6	8	95	46	36	7	225
Yellow-throated Vireo	4	2		9	9		1	25
Blue-headed Vireo	18	1			4			23
Red-eyed Vireo	67	26	27	77	61	42	12	312
Blue Jay	57	90	28	66	6	28	9	284
American Crow	250	169	120	108	20	78	16	761
Fish Crow	6	8	6	20	4	52	14	110
crow sp.				41			1	42
Horned Lark			1				1	2
Tree Swallow	15	9	2	1		2	4	33
Northern Rough-winged	93	28	15	35		19	4	194

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Swallow								
Purple Martin	87	10	6	16		25	2	146
Barn Swallow	87	42	13	54	4	162	56	418
Cliff Swallow	38	42	56	31	2			169
Carolina Chickadee	48	95	11	55	16	126	5	356
Tufted Titmouse	79	103	22	122	47	61	7	441
Red-breasted Nuthatch		4						4
White-breasted Nuthatch	16	16	3	7	11			53
Brown-headed Nuthatch	24	10	6	40		20	4	104
House Wren	1	6						7
Marsh Wren						3		3
Carolina Wren	91	99	24	148	30	112	31	535
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	72	17	8	68	50	99	11	325
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		2						2
Eastern Bluebird	115	154	48	88	1	59	3	468
Veery				1				1
Hermit Thrush		3						3
Wood Thrush	12	6		1	11			30
American Robin	61	151	21	5	5	8		251
Gray Catbird	24	22	1	13	3	3		66
Brown Thrasher	49	63	10	17		12	11	162
Northern Mockingbird	81	131	52	45	2	42	8	361
European Starling	91	120	88	49		19	4	371
Cedar Waxwing	140	147	15	74		7		383
House Sparrow	22	16	4	31		1		74
House Finch	68	123	10	12		21	2	236
Purple Finch		4						4
American Goldfinch	111	86	4	28		2		231
Bachman's Sparrow				2		3	3	8
Grasshopper Sparrow	8		5					13
Chipping Sparrow	31	68	11	23			3	136
Field Sparrow	27	46	11					84
Dark-eyed Junco	1							1
White-throated Sparrow	1	16						17
Nelson's Sparrow						2		2
Savannah Sparrow	1	1						2
Song Sparrow	11	23	1					35
Eastern Towhee	44	50	15	94	2	41	5	251
Yellow-breasted Chat	22	3	5	27	1	4	4	66
Bobolink				4		18	78	100
Eastern Meadowlark	24	10	22	2				58
Orchard Oriole	8	6		14	1	27	5	61
Red-winged Blackbird	56	29	8	13		244	109	459
Brown-headed Cowbird	26	62	36	50	1	31	11	217
Common Grackle	109	141	32	33	23	54	23	415
Boat-tailed Grackle						90	54	144
Ovenbird	12	2	1	5	1	5		26
Worm-eating Warbler	6					6		12
Louisiana Waterthrush	10	9	2	6	2			29
Black-and-white Warbler	6	3	3	11	3	2	1	29
Prothonotary Warbler	6	2	1	23	22	33	1	88
Swainson's Warbler	2			1	6	1	1	11
Kentucky Warbler	3	1		8	2	1		15
Common Yellowthroat	36	17	6	18	6	30	26	139
Hooded Warbler	15	6	5	11	19	34	3	93
American Redstart	19	5		16	10	3	11	64
Cape May Warbler	3	2		4	1			10
Northern Parula	35	6	2	127	77	79	20	346

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Magnolia Warbler	1	4						5
Yellow Warbler	2	1		2	1	2		8
Chestnut-sided Warbler		1						1
Blackpoll Warbler		1		2	3			6
Black-throated Blue Warbler	16			12	13	1	1	43
Pine Warbler	28	20	13	89	8	113	14	285
Yellow-rumped Warbler	14	5		2		2		23
Yellow-throated Warbler		8		29	23	23	3	86
Prairie Warbler	5	2		35		10	2	54
Black-throated Green Warbler	6							6
Summer Tanager	7	13	7	103	29	29	7	195
Scarlet Tanager	28	4	1	6	1			40
Northern Cardinal	137	215	25	192	70	191	29	859
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6	9		1				16
Blue Grosbeak	26	4	2	29	3	11	6	81
Indigo Bunting	59	43	29	98	18	12	16	275
Painted Bunting				16	2	55	6	79
Dickcissel						1		1
Species	109	119	77	121	75	148	93	193
Total individuals	3513	3958	1154	3883	1004	7426	1031	21949
Regular Count								
Hours foot		37.5	9	35	19.25	52.81	7.2	
Hours car		17	5	37.5		14.5	5.7	
Hours boat					4.5	7.7		
Hours canoe/kayak				2				
Hours bike		1						
Hours other (golf cart)						3.2		
Miles foot		26	8	19.4	11.6	28.2	1.5	
Miles car		408.5	146	164		117.7	82.5	
Miles boat					11	22.55		
Miles canoe/kayak				1				
Miles bike		4						
Miles other (golf cart)						3.8		
# Regular parties		11	5	9		20	2	
# Regular observers	36	12	8	14	24	33	3	130
#Species		110	74	119	75			
#Individuals		2883	1082	3803	1004			
Stationary								
Hours Stationary				1		1.5		
# Parties				1		1		
# Observers				1		1		2
# Species				21				
# Individuals				28				
Feeder Watch								
Hours Feeder Watch		59	5	3				
#Feeder Watchers		23	1	2				26
#Feeder Stations		16	1	4				
#Species		68	16	10				
#Individuals		913	70	58				

	Gree	Spar	Cher	Aike	Cong	Charl	Jasp	Total
Nocturnal								
Hours Nocturnal		5	2	3		2.15	0.5	
Miles Nocturnal		50	5	7		6.6	0.25	
#Parties nocturnal		3	1	3		3	1	
#Observers nocturnal		6	1	3		6	1	
#Species		6	2	3		10	1	
#Individuals		162	8	8		44	2	
Totals								
Hours	75	119	19	81.5	23.75	81.86	13.4	413.51
Miles	221	458.5	159	191.4	22.6	178.8	84.25	1315.5
Time Start		0600	0600	0530	0530	0540	0550	
Time Stop		2200	2200	2020	1645	1623	1618	
Temperature								
Pre-Dawn				51		57	70	
Dawn	39	56	67	49	48	55	70	
AM				62		63	70	
Noon				70		68	72	
PM	70	70	86	73	72	75	72	
Sunset				71		70		
Night				64		57		
Wind								
Pre-Dawn				W7		0-5		
Dawn		light	light	W6	light	0-5		
AM		light	light	WNW10	light	5-10		
Noon		light	light	W7	light	5-10		
PM		light	light	W9	light	10-15		
Sunset		light	light	WNW4		calm		
Night		light	light	N15		calm		
% Clouds								
Pre-Dawn				25	0	15-30	100	
Dawn	100	80	0	10	0	0-15	100	
AM	100	80	0	0	0	0-15	90	
Noon	100	80	0	0	0	0-15	100	
PM	100	80	0	0	0	0-15	100	
Sunset				25		0-15		
Night				45		0-15		
Precipitation								
Pre-Dawn				0		0	light	
Dawn	light	light	0	0	shower	0	light	
AM	light	light	0	0	shower	0	light	
Noon	light	light	0	0	heavy	0	heavy	
PM	light	light	0	0	heavy	0	heavy	
Sunset		light	0	0		0		
Night				0				

Specimens and Eggs of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) Purportedly From the Carolinas

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The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) was a former resident of South Carolina and North Carolina. David Lee (1999) reviewed the few records of the species for North Carolina, with the most prominent record being that of Alexander Wilson (1828) who captured an Ivory-billed Woodpecker near Wilmington. Sprunt and Chamberlain (1972) and Jackson (2006) presented South Carolina's more numerous records of the species. In addition to those records, a clutch of eggs and two adult specimens should be noted for the history of the species in the Carolinas, at least as hypotheticals.

Two eggs purportedly belonging to the Ivory-billed Woodpecker were collected by Norwood Giles. They are recorded as being from Wilmington, North Carolina, but no collection date is listed. These eggs are held at the National Museum of Natural History (USNM), Smithsonian Institution (specimen USNM B 16196), and they were mentioned by Bendire in his life history series (1895). The USNM holds only a few sets of eggs of various species which were collected by Giles. Although no date is given for the Ivory-bill Woodpecker eggs, the other sets in the collection are dated 1872. There remains some uncertainty about the location of the collection of the set, as most of the egg sets from Giles in the Smithsonan are listed as being from Wilmington, which was his home. So it is possible that the location for the eggs refers only to his home. However, one set of eggs is listed as coming from Maryland and another from South Carolina, so the location label seems to refer to a place of collection. Furthermore, the collection site seems legitimate because it is reasonable that a collector of his day would have mainly collected close to home.

Two adult specimens of the species are held in the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, Germany, and both list "Carolina" as the collection location. Although the specimens are listed in Hahn's detailed list of specimens (1963), they are not noted in the standard ornithological reference books for either North or South Carolina (Pearson et al. 1942, Sprunt et al. 1970, Potter et al. 2006). One specimen, ZMB 10349, was accessioned into the museum on 7 March 1816. The other, ZMB 10350, was purchased at "Bullock-Auktion" on 8 June 1819. The latter specimen likely went to Germany via William Bullock's Museum and Pantherion in Piccadilly Egyptian Hall, London. The museum's collection was dispersed via auction in 1819 and replaced by artifacts which Bullock (for whom the Bullock's Oriole, *Icterus bullockii*, is named) brought from Mexico. Neither specimen gives an exact date or location for its collection. There is no way to know to which of the Carolinas the tag data refer, but the curator of the collection believes that

South Carolina is the more likely choice (pers. comm.) given that other specimens in the collection from that time period are definitely from South Carolina.

None of these specimens provides adequate documentation to be unreservedly admitted to the records for either state. However, they are worth noting as intriguing hypothetical records for the past distribution of the species in the Carolinas.

Acknowledgements

I thank Dr. Pascal Eckhoff of Museum für Naturkunde and Dr. Craig Ludwig of the Smithsonian for their correspondence regarding the specimens mentioned in this field note.

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BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Summer 2019, unless otherwise noted)

Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.

Winter	*December 1–February 28*	*due March 20*
Spring	*March 1–May 31*	*due June 20*
Summer	*June 1–July 31*	*due August 20*
Fall	*August 1–November 30*	*due December 20*

Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.

Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.

Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.

I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.

If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.

Abbreviations: **BRC** – Bird Records Committee, **et al.** – and others, **Ft** – Fort, **Ln** – Lane, **m. obs.** – multiple observers, **NC** – North Carolina, **NWR** – National Wildlife Refuge, **Rd** – Road, **SC** – South Carolina, **SP** – State Park

All italicized place names are counties.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: This species continues its range expansion northward and inland. 18 on Lake Junaluska *Haywood* NC 11 Jun (Rose Johnson, Bob Olthoff, Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, et al.) was an amazing count for the mountain region. 24 at the pond adjacent to Ashley High School in Wilmington *New Hanover* NC 13 Jul (Tom Sanders, et al.) was a new record high count for NC. Also locally unusual were two in James City *Craven* NC 4 Jun (Ronnie Hewlette), five at a farm along Arabia Rd *Hoke* NC 19-20 Jun (Eric Johnson, m. obs.), three at Wateree Heritage Preserve *Richland* SC 21 Jun (Julie Mobley), one in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 15 Jul (Michael Gosselin, Audrey Whitlock), two on a pond along Aurora Rd *Craven* NC 16 Jul (Lester Coble), and three at the Cheraw Fish Hatchery *Chesterfield* SC 25 Jul (Jacob Beam). Breeding in NC was documented for the first time when two chicks were found in an abandoned tree-cavity nest in Arapahoe *Pamlico* NC and collected by a wildlife rehabilitator 1 Aug (*fide* Ryan Bakelaar).

Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks
11 Jun 2019, Haywood Co, NC
Photo by Stan Wulkowicz

Redhead: Individuals lingered at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC until 4 Jun (Audrey Whitlock) and at Dobbins Farm *Anderson* SC until 11 Jun (Joe & Liz Dunkleman).

Ring-necked Duck: A drake lingered on a pond along US-1 in southern *Lee* NC into summer for a third year in a row 9 Jun (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton).

Greater Scaup: A drake lingered at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC until 4 Jun (Audrey Whitlock). A hen on Bass Lake in Blowing Rock *Watauga* NC 25 Jun (Margaret Dunson) into fall (m. obs.) was very unusual for the mountains in summer.

Lesser Scaup: A drake summered on a pond along Church Hollow Rd in Foscoe *Watauga* NC, seen 6 Mar into September (Steve Dowlan, m. obs.).

Common Eider: Single hens at Winyah Bay Inlet *Georgetown* SC 26 Jun (Wendy Allen), in Corolla *Currituck* NC 13 Jul (Manuel Morales), and in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 20 Jul (Jim Gould) were unusual for summer. It's likely that at least the latter two sightings involved the same individual.

Surf Scoter: A few lingered along the coast later into summer than usual, mostly alongside lingering Black Scoters, including two at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 18 Jun (Keith Watson), a drake at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 19 Jun (Paul Laurent) through 22 Jul (Ritch Lilly), and three at Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 3-5 Jul (Lisa Nasta, m. obs.) with a hen continuing there through 12 Aug (Karen Hogan).

Black Scoter: Though a few traditionally linger into early June each year, Black Scoters were reported in greater numbers and later into the summer than is typical this year. Some of the higher counts were 25 at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 4 Jun (Bruce Smithson), 68 at Winyah Bay Inlet *Georgetown* SC 26 Jun (Wendy Allen), and 70 at Cape Romain NWR *Charleston* SC 26 Jun (John Cox). Seven around Jennette's Pier *Dare* NC 13 Jul (Susan Campbell) was a notable count for July. One at Fish Haul Beach Park *Beaufort* SC until 20 Jun (Scott Northey) was the southernmost sighting.

Red-breasted Merganser: Late sightings included a hen at Murrells Inlet *Georgetown* SC 21 Jun through 29 Jul (m. obs.), three hens at Winyah Bay Inlet *Georgetown* SC 26 Jun (Wendy Allen), two hens at New River Inlet *Onslow* NC 26 Jul (Gilbert Grant), and a drake at High Falls County Park *Oconee* SC 27 Jul (Pat Herrick).

Pied-billed Grebe: Breeding was confirmed in the Sandhills region, at McIntosh Bay *Scotland* NC, where two family groups including adults, juveniles and hatchlings were seen and photographed 13 Jun (Rex Badgett).

White-winged Dove: Individuals were photographed at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 18 Jun (Karen Lebing) and at a feeder in North Myrtle Beach *Horry* SC 21-23 Jun (Deb Winter).

White-winged Dove
18 Jun 2019, Dare Co, NC
Photo by Karen Lebing

Black-billed Cuckoo: Pairs seen and heard vocalizing along the border of *Buncombe* and *Haywood* NC 10 Jun (Jamie Harrelson, Steve Semanchuk) and in northwest *Henderson* NC 26 Jun (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey) were suggestive of breeding at those sites.

Rufous Hummingbird: An adult male photographed at a feeder near Lenoir *Caldwell* NC 30 Jun (*fide* Dwayne Martin) was very unusual for summer.

Purple Gallinule: Breeding was confirmed at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC when two adults and four chicks were photographed there 19 Jul (Karen & Tom Beatty, m. obs.), a first for NC in several decades and possibly the first ever for northeastern NC.

Limpkin: The Limpkin influx that began in late spring continued into summer. In SC, individuals were photographed at the Hidden Cypress Golf Club *Beaufort* 3 Jun (John Bloomfield, et al.) and at the Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center *Dorchester* 5 Jun (Matt Johnson, m. obs.). Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of an apparent

Limpkin at Owen Park *Buncombe* NC 8 Jul (Sam Pratt). If accepted, the report would provide the first record for the mountain region. Two were seen at the north end of Goose Creek Reservoir *Berkeley* SC throughout August (m. obs.) where, according to residents, the birds had been present for about a month (*fide* Pam Ford).

Black-necked Stilt: Two pairs seen around the Cedar Island Ferry Terminal *Carteret* NC 14 Jul (John Fussell, Steve Howell, Jack Fennell) were likely nesting in that area.

American Avocet: Individuals photographed at Lake Crabtree *Wake* NC 12 Jul (Colleen Bockhahn, et al.) and at Yadkin Memorial Park *Yadkin* NC 13 Jul (Danna Cable) were good finds for those inland sites.

American Golden-Plover: One seen at the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 28 Jun (Jim & Susan Hengeveld) was unusual for mid-summer.

Pacific Golden-Plover: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report of a Pacific Golden-Plover around the Salt Pond at Cape Point *Dare* NC 29 Jul through 7 Aug (Michael Gosselin, m. obs.). If accepted, the report would provide the first record of this shorebird in the Carolinas.

Pending BRC review, this would be North Carolina's first record of Pacific Golden-Plover
29 Jul 2019, Dare Co, NC
Photo by Michael Gosselin

Upland Sandpiper: One photographed at Huntington Beach SP Georgetown SC 7 Jun (Jerry Kerschner) was quite late. One heard and then seen in flight over the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jul (Ricky Davis) was locally unusual. The first sighting of fall at Wilmington International Airport *New Hanover* NC was made 30 Jul when three were seen there (Sam Cooper).

Marbled Godwit: One seen and photographed along Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 23-24 Jul (Bob Butler, m. obs.) was a great find for the mountain region.

Ruff: Remarkably, two distinct individuals were found in the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC in early July—an orange-faced adult male still retaining breeding plumage ruff feathers 7 Jul (Ricky Davis, m. obs.) and 11 Jul (Greg Moyers) and a white-necked adult molting into non-breeding plumage 9 Jul (Karen Lebing) and 12 Jul (Jesse Anderson, Ed Corey).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Pending review by the NC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on South Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 11-12 Jul (Karen Lebing, m. obs.). If accepted, the sighting would become the third official record of this Eurasian vagrant in NC.

Pending BRC review, this would be NC's 3rd record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 11 Jul 2019, Dare Co, NC Photo by Karen Lebing

Wilson's Phalarope: An adult male was seen and photographed on North Pond at Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 26 Jun (Audrey Whitlock) through 1 Jul (Scott Stafford).

Red-necked Phalarope: An adult female photographed on the beach in Salvo *Dare* NC 2 Jun (Karen Lebing) may have been sick or injured.

Brown Noddy: One was briefly seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 27 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Least Tern: 68 chicks at a rooftop nest-site in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 10 Jun (*fide* John Fussell) was an encouraging count. In general, building practices have moved away from flat, gravel-covered roofs in recent decades, reducing nesting opportunities.

Roseate Tern: In *Dare* NC, individuals were photographed at Cape Point 13 Jun (Michael Gosselin) and on the beach in Nags Head 2 Jul (Scott Stafford). Pending review by the SC BRC are several reports of one on the south side of Murrells Inlet at Huntington Beach SP *Georgetown* SC 30 Jun through 4 Jul (Paul Laurent, m. obs.) and a report of two, possibly three, at that site 5 Jul (Ritch Lilly, Shawn Smolen-Morton).

Royal Tern: 6000 estimated on a spoil island in the Pamlico Sound west of Oregon Inlet *Dare* NC during a banding operation 1 Jul (Peggy Eubank, et al.) was a notable count.

Red-billed Tropicbird: An immature was seen during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Common Loon: 12 beyond the surf in Duck *Dare* NC 26 Jun (Stephanie & Virginia Smith) and three on Belews Lake *Rockingham* NC 1 Jul (Marty Wall) were notable counts for summer.

White-faced Storm-Petrel: Individuals were seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras *Dare* NC on two consecutive days, 26 Jul and 27 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Trindade Petrel: A dark-morph individual was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 29 Jun (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Bermuda Petrel: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 27 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Fea's Petrel: One was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 26 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.).

Cory's Shearwater: A sick/injured individual found at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 5 Jul (Erik Thomas) was collected by a wildlife rehabilitator. Two were seen in flight over the ocean from the beach in Salvo *Dare* NC 10 Jul (Karen Lebing).

Great Shearwater: A moribund individual found on a street in Morehead City *Carteret* NC 18 Jun (John Fussell) and one seen in flight over the Roanoke Sound near Nags Head *Dare* NC 21 Jun (Brian Patteson) were unusual away from the ocean. From shore, individuals were seen on/over the ocean from Kiawah Island *Charleston* SC 19 Jun (Mary Barritt), from the Core Banks *Carteret* NC 25 Jun (Steven Freed), from Nags Head *Dare* NC 1 Jul (Audrey Whitlock), from Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 10 Jul (Greg Hudson), and from Holden Beach *Brunswick* NC 10 Jul (Marty Wall).

Audubon's Shearwater: One seen in flight over the surf at Cape Point *Dare* NC 20 Jul (Michael Gosselin) was a good find from shore.

Wood Stork: North of the species' typical range were eight photographed at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC 3 Jul (Nathaniel Wilkins) and two seen in flight over Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 7 Jul (Ricky Davis).

Magnificent Frigatebird: Eight sightings were reported this summer, all of individuals and most of juvenile/subadult birds, at scattered sites along the coast between Cape Point *Dare* NC and *Charleston* SC.

Masked Booby: Two adults were seen together during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras *Dare* NC 6 Jul (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland, et al.). One wonders if those two birds were a mated pair. A subadult, possibly injured, was photographed resting on the beach in Southern Shores *Dare* NC 20 Jul (Susan Carney).

Brown Booby: A juvenile was photographed resting inside the bird protection area at Cape Point *Dare* NC 13 Jun (Megan Baker).

Northern Gannet: Possibly the most unusual sighting of the summer was that of an adult gannet resting in a residential driveway in East Bend *Yadkin* NC where photographed 17 Jun (*fide* Nathan Gatto). The bird was collected by a wildlife rehabilitator and taken to the NC Zoological Park (Cindy Pirson). If accepted by the BRC, the report would provide only the second official record of this oceanic species at an inland site in NC. Closer to the ocean, a juvenile gannet photographed over the Pamlico Sound in Waves Dare NC 21 Jul (Karen Lebing) was unusual for summer.

Anhinga: Farthest inland were two at Lake Conestee Nature Park *Greenville* SC 14 Jun (Michael Oliver), two soaring over southwest Winston-Salem *Forsyth* NC 29 Jun (Carol Cunningham), and ten at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge *Mecklenburg* NC 2 Jul (Garrett Little) with at least one remaining through 19 Jul (Greg Hays).

Brown Pelican: An immature pelican at Lake Reidsville *Rockingham* NC 24 Jun through 6 Jul (Marty Wall, m. obs.) was unusual inland.

Reddish Egret: One on South Pond Pea Island NWR *Dare* NC 13 Jul (m. obs.) was the northernmost sighting made this summer.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: A juvenile photographed along N Rugby Rd *Henderson* NC 20-22 Jul (Kevin Burke, m. obs.) was a good find for the mountain region.

Roseate Spoonbill: This conspicuous wading bird was well-reported along the SC coast this summer, but did not irrupt northward or inland as it did last year. An individual at the Rachel Carson Reserve *Carteret* NC 9 Jun through the end of the period (John Fussell, m. obs.) was the only one reported in NC.

Swallow-tailed Kite: As usual, kites began dispersing from their breeding grounds in late July. Eight just northeast of Six Mile *Pickens* SC 27 Jul (Kate & Richard Byrd) was a notable count for upstate SC. At Irma's Produce Fields, a traditional late-summer kite gathering spot in recent years, near exit 75 on I-40 *McDowell* NC, one was first seen 21 Jul (Steve Shultz), two were seen 31 Jul (Dwayne Martin), three were seen 3-4 Aug (David Schroder, m. obs.), and one remained until 15 Aug (James Polling).

Northern Harrier: One lingered around the south end of Bodie Island *Dare* NC from spring (Linda Ward, m. obs.) through 3 Jul (Audrey Whitlock). Harriers likely nested at Cedar Island NWR *Carteret* NC again this year, as four harriers were seen together there 14 Jul (John Fussell, Steve Howell, Jack Fennell).

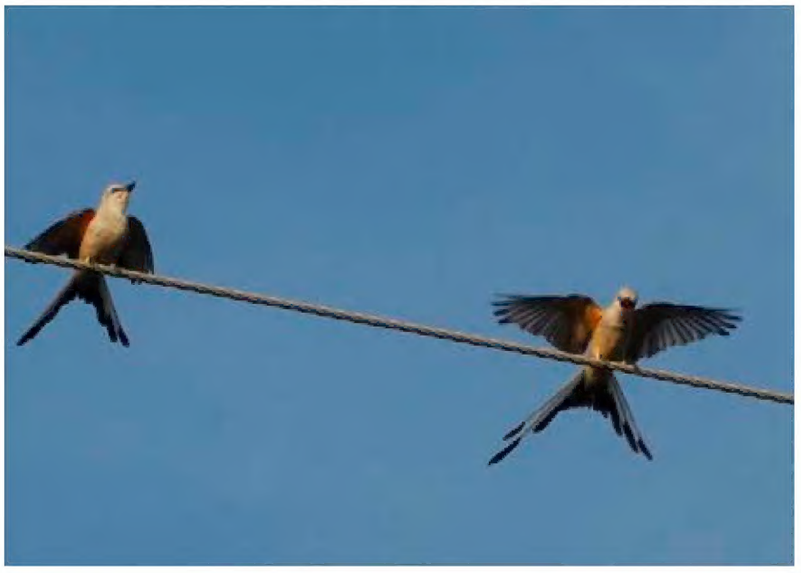
Mississippi Kite: Kites apparently nested in Pittsboro *Chatham* NC this summer, as two adults were seen tending to a juvenile 11 Jul into August (Carole Stroupe, m. obs.).

Merlin: Individuals over Hooper Ln *Henderson* NC 21 Jul (Steve Shultz) and the Lake Landing section of Mattamuskeet NWR *Hyde* NC 28 Jul (Ricky Davis) were early.

Tropical Kingbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Tropical Kingbird at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 16 Jun (Pam Ford, Craig Watson). If accepted, the report would provide SC its second definitive record.

Gray Kingbird: One was briefly seen at Ft Moultrie *Charleston* SC 9 Jun (Pam Ford, Craig Watson) but not again thereafter.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: At least four juveniles fledged from the nest site discovered in late April near the Rock Hill-York County Airport *York* SC in early July (m. obs.). Breeding was also confirmed at another site in upstate SC, atop a utility pole along Webber Rd in western *Cherokee* SC, where up to two adults and three juveniles were seen 27 Jul into September (Christy Hill, m. obs.). Two, probably a mated pair, were seen and photographed at athletic fields along Bryant Rd *Spartanburg* SC 19-20 Jun (Kade Lockhart, m. obs.). An adult male seen at the marina along Eaton Ferry Rd on Lake Gaston *Warren* NC 1-14 Jul (m. obs.) may have been nesting with an Eastern Kingbird.



Scissor-tailed Flycatchers
6 Jul 2019, Greenville Co, SC
Photo by Jerry Griggs

Black-whiskered Vireo: One heard singing and later seen on Sugarloaf Island, just off the Morehead City waterfront *Carteret* NC 17-20 Jun (John Fussell, m. obs.) provided NC with its first report in a decade.

Tree Swallow: A pair seen building a nest in a Wood Duck box along South Creek near Aurora *Beaufort* NC 5 Jun (Sam Cooper) was unusual for that area.

Cedar Waxwing: Waxwings may have bred at Mackay Island NWR *Currituck* NC this summer, as juveniles were photographed there 19 Jul (Karen & Tom Beatty).

Lark Sparrow: One was photographed along Howerton Rd *Guilford* NC 2 Jun (Dawn Lloyd). One was seen and heard singing in the Sandhills Game Land *Scotland* NC 27 Jul (Jeff Beane, Stephanie Horton).

White-throated Sparrow: One photographed in a yard in western *Cabarrus* NC 13 Jun (Patty Masten) was quite late.

Bobolink: Bobolinks were suspected of nesting in tall grass fields at three sites in the NC mountains—in western *Watauga* where six were seen 17 Jun (Steve Dowlan), in Bamboo *Watauga* where four were seen in June (m. obs.), and at Island Ford Landing *Transylvania* where adults were seen carrying food in early July (m. obs.). Individual adult males in the Dan River Game Land *Rockingham* NC 11 Jun (Marbry Hopkins), along Baldwin Rd *Guilford* NC 12-17 Jun (m. obs.), along Buffalo Church Rd *Cleveland* NC 15 Jun (Bill Hooker), and along Mid-Pines Rd *Wake* NC 7 Jul (John Connors) were unusual for those sites during the summer.

Shiny Cowbird: Pending review by the SC BRC is the report with photographs of an apparent Shiny Cowbird visiting a feeder in West Ashley *Charleston* SC 11-14 Jul (Joy Brown, m. obs.).

Apparent Shiny Cowbird
12 Jul 2019, Charleston Co, SC
Photo by Craig Watson

Blue-winged Warbler: One at Harris Lake County Park *Wake* NC 23 Jul (Mike Maier, Lawrence Zoller) was early passing through.

Magnolia Warbler: Breeding was confirmed on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC when an adult male and two recently-fledged juveniles were seen and photographed 12 Jul (Will Johnson). Also in the NC mountains were two singing males along the Gunter Fork Trail *Haywood* 17 Jun (Miles & Seth Buddy) and one adult male along the Beacon Heights Overlook Trail *Avery* 19 Jun (Gordon Warburton) and 8 Jul (Johnson).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: A singing adult male seen and photographed in Nags Head *Dare* NC 4-5 Jun (Audrey Whitlock) was quite late.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Individual migrants at Ft Fisher *New Hanover* NC 4 Jun (Bruce Smithson) and at Pine Island Audubon Sanctuary *Currituck* NC 4 Jun (Jonathan Cooley, et al.) were late passing through. Five singing males were counted along Black Balsam Rd in the Pisgah National Forest *Haywood* NC 3 Jun (Marilyn Westphal) though no evidence of nesting was found. Individual adult males were found at Clingman's Dome *Swain* NC 16 Jun (Steve Patterson) and on Roan Mountain *Mitchell* NC 18 Jul (Charles Crawford). Two adult males were seen at Clingman's Dome 19 Jul (Vicky Burke, Keith Watson).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: One photographed at a feeder in Huntersville *Mecklenburg* NC 5 Jun (Geoff White) was late for a site outside the mountains.

CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

www.carolinabirdclub.org

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

Membership is open to all persons interested in the conservation, natural history, and study of wildlife with particular emphasis on birds. Dues, contributions, and bequests to the Club may be deductible from state and federal income and estate taxes to the extent allowable. Pay dues or make donations at https://carolinabirdclub.org/dues. Make change of address at https://www.carolinabirdclub.org/members/profile. Send correspondence regarding membership matters to the Headquarters Secretary. Answers to questions about the club might be found at https://carolinabirdclub.org/about.html.

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Individual or non-profit	$30.00
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Student	$15.00
Sustaining and businesses	$30.00
Patron	$50.00 and up
Life Membership (payable in four consecutive $100 installments)	$500.00
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